



# THE INVISIBLE MONSTER

## STORIES FROM NAHALI FOLKLORE





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**Founder Editor: Anant Pai**

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# THE INVISIBLE MONSTER

ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A SMALL VILLAGE, THERE LIVED AN OLD WIDOWER AND HIS SON.

FATHER, HOW LONG WILL YOU TOIL IN THE FIELDS WITH ME? YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH NOW.

SON, IF I STOP WORKING, HOW WILL WE MAKE ENDS MEET?

WE WORK SO HARD YET WE REMAIN POOR. LET US SEEK OUR FORTUNE SOMEPLACE ELSE.

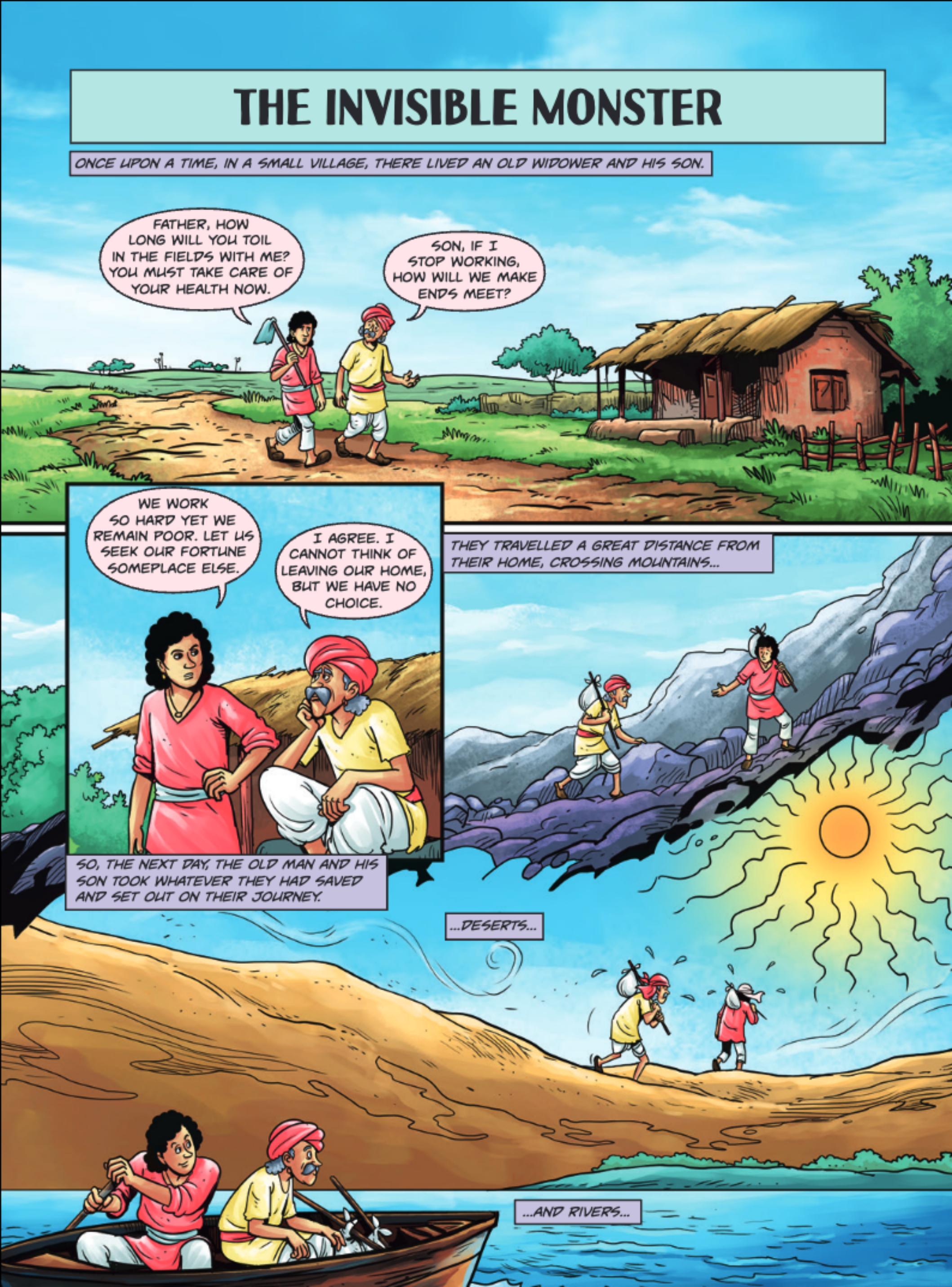
I AGREE. I CANNOT THINK OF LEAVING OUR HOME, BUT WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

THEY TRAVELED A GREAT DISTANCE FROM THEIR HOME, CROSSING MOUNTAINS...

SO, THE NEXT DAY, THE OLD MAN AND HIS SON TOOK WHATEVER THEY HAD SAVED AND SET OUT ON THEIR JOURNEY.

...DESERTS...

...AND RIVERS...



...UNTIL THEY ENTERED A LUSH, GREEN FOREST.

IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL! OH, I COULD LIVE HERE FOREVER.

IF ONLY WE COULD FIND SOMETHING TO EAT. I'M STARVING!

AS THEY EXPLORED THE FOREST —

LOOK, FATHER! THERE IS SMOKE RISING IN THE DISTANCE. WE MAY GET SOME FOOD THERE.

LET US GO AND FIND OUT.

WOW! WHAT A FANCY-LOOKING MANSION!

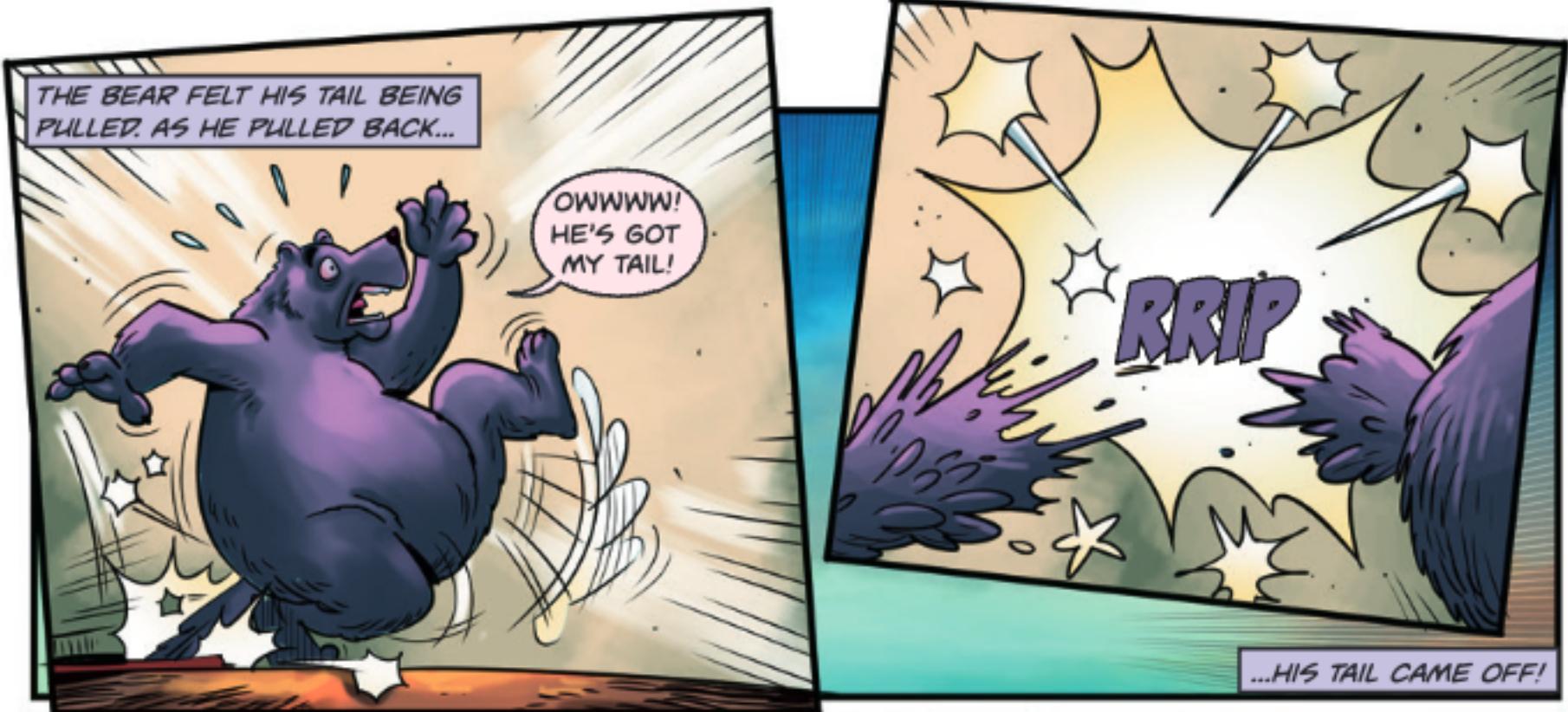
## THE INVISIBLE MONSTER



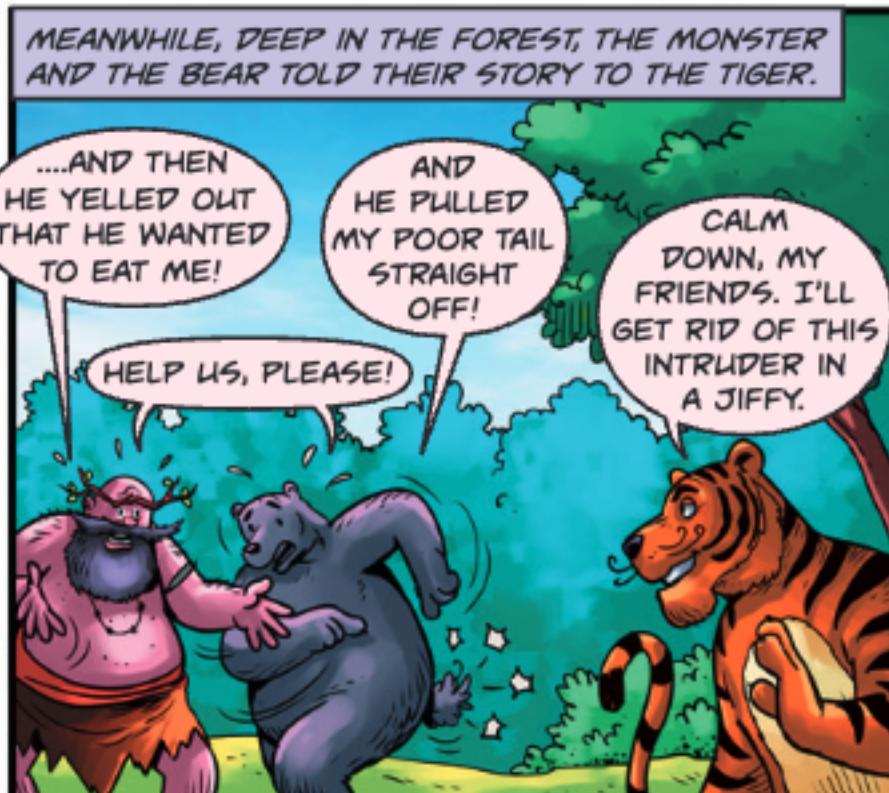


## THE INVISIBLE MONSTER





## THE INVISIBLE MONSTER





BOTH THE MEN WENT BACK TO THE MANSION.

FINALLY, SOME FOOD!

AFTER EATING THEIR FILL, THEY EXPLORED THE HOUSE.

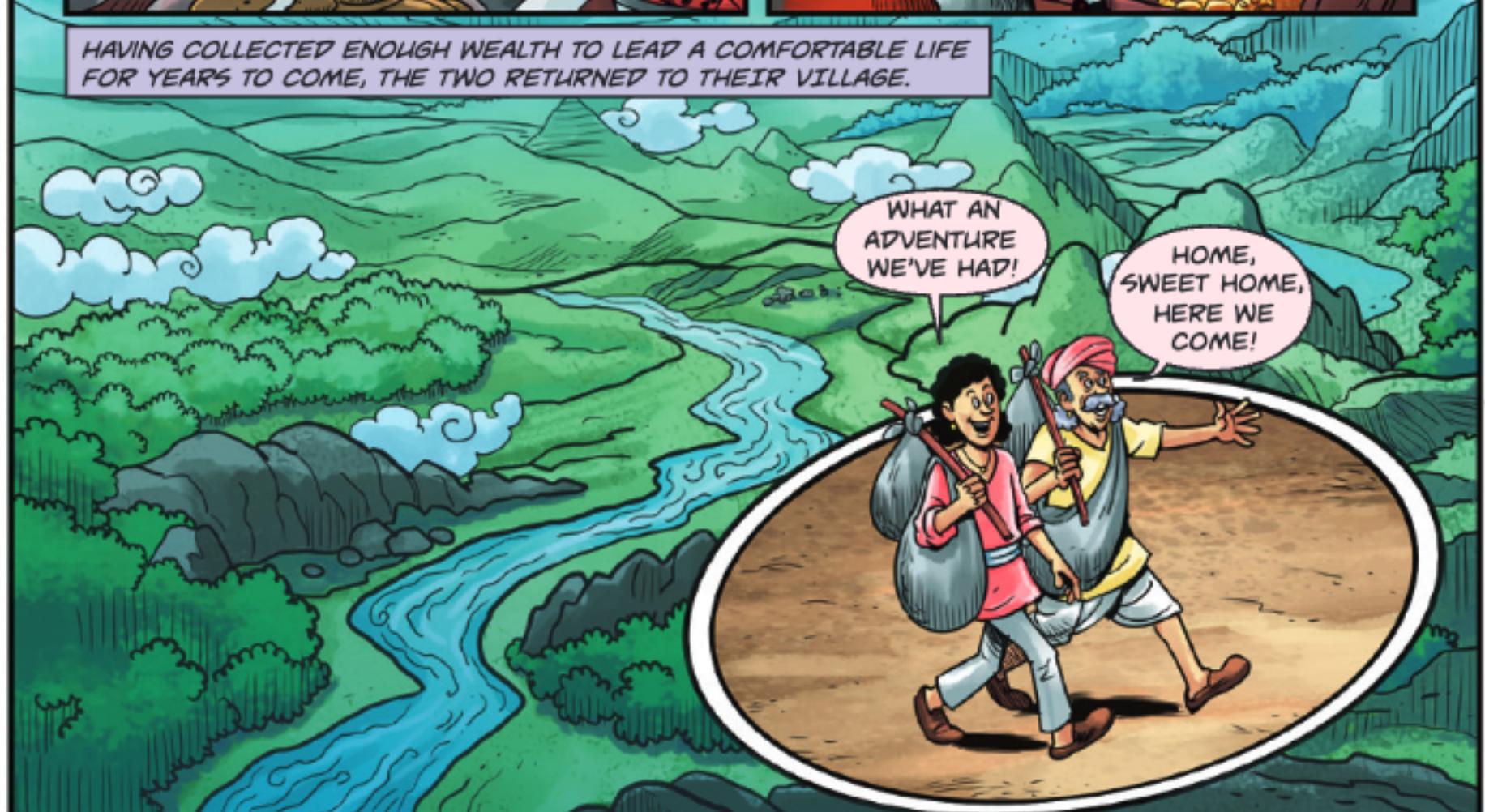
SO MUCH GOLD! THE MONSTER HAS LEFT US A TREASURE.



HAVING COLLECTED ENOUGH WEALTH TO LEAD A COMFORTABLE LIFE FOR YEARS TO COME, THE TWO RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGE.

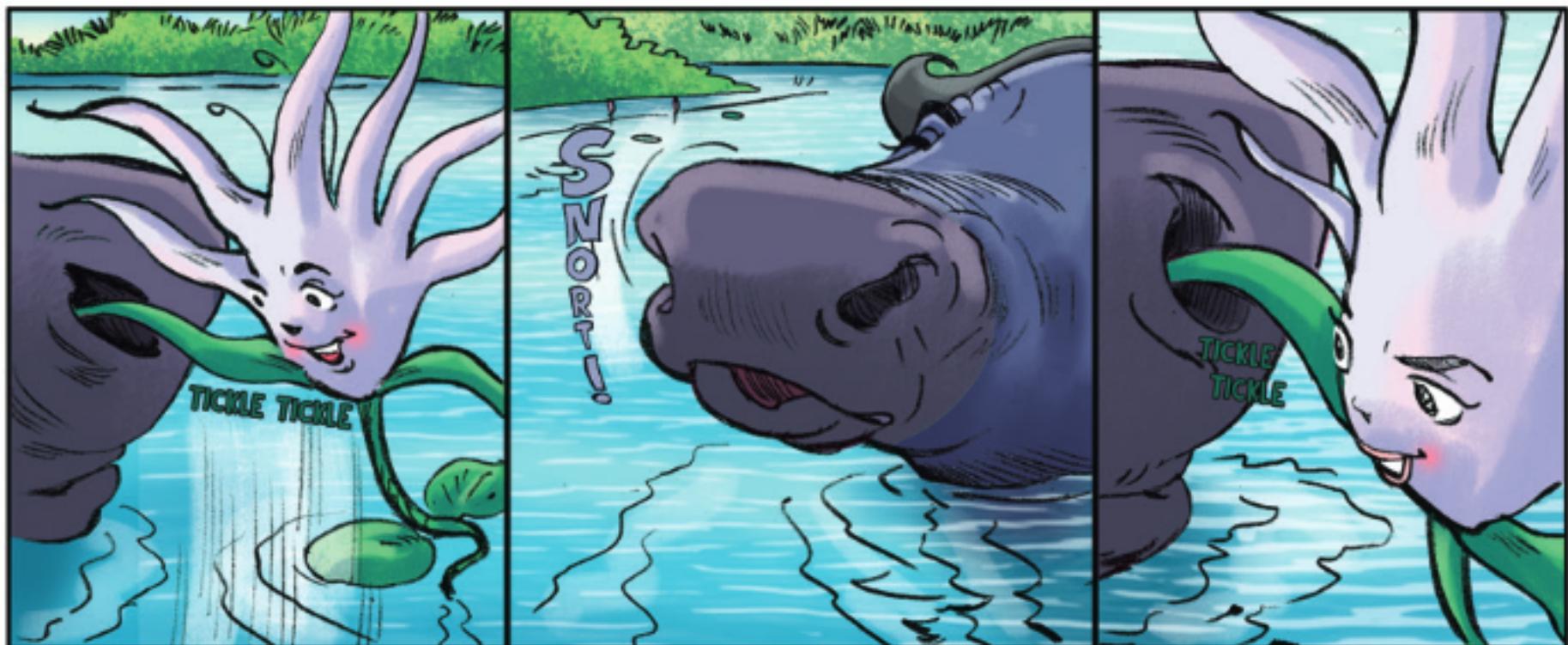
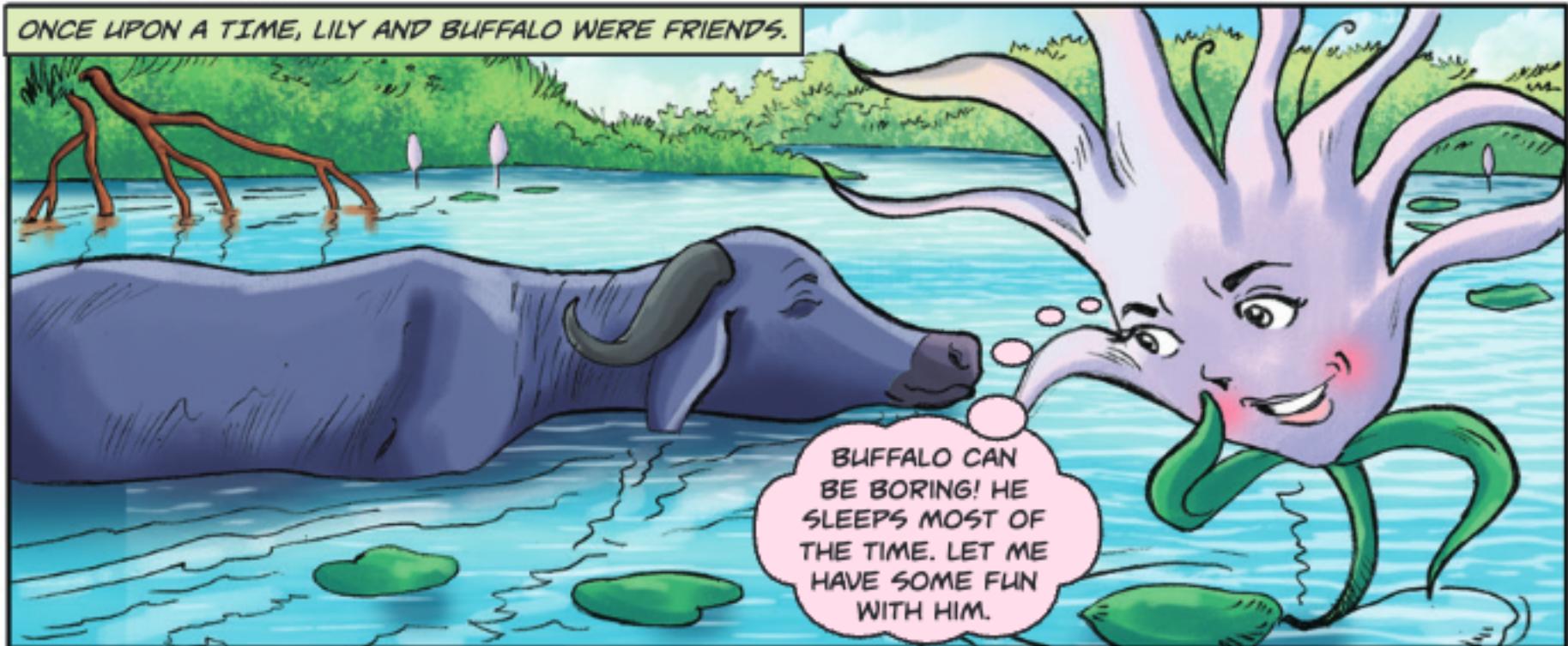
WHAT AN ADVENTURE WE'VE HAD!

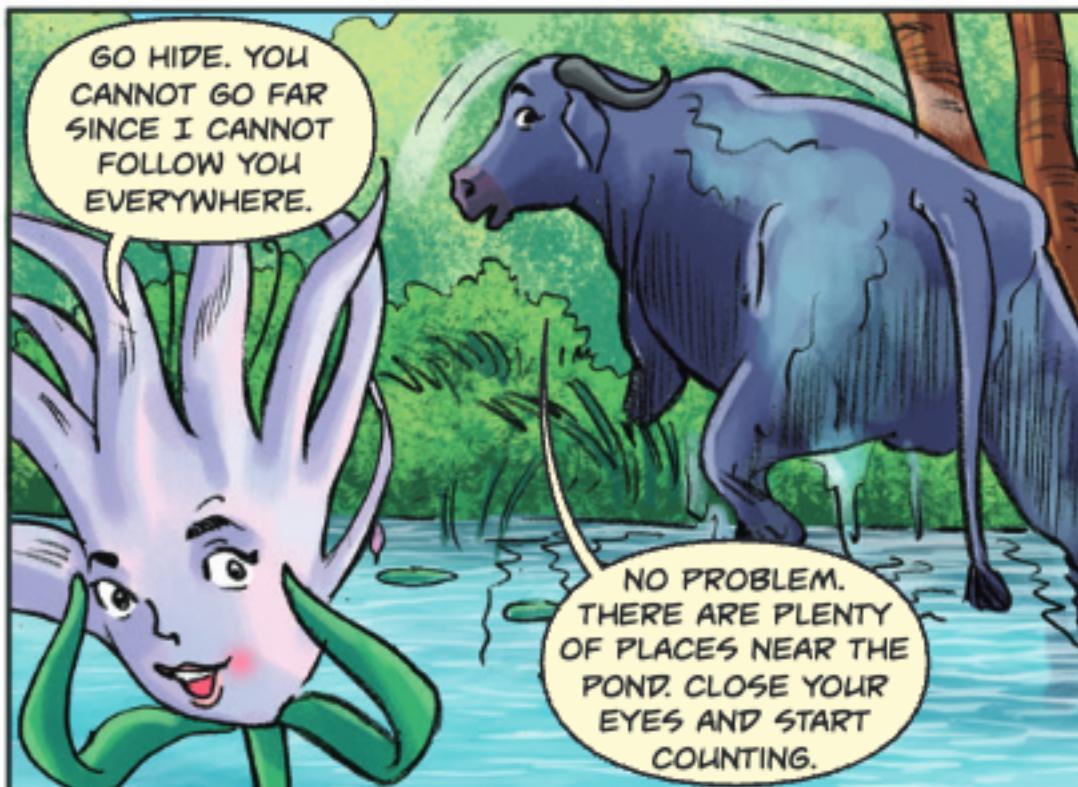
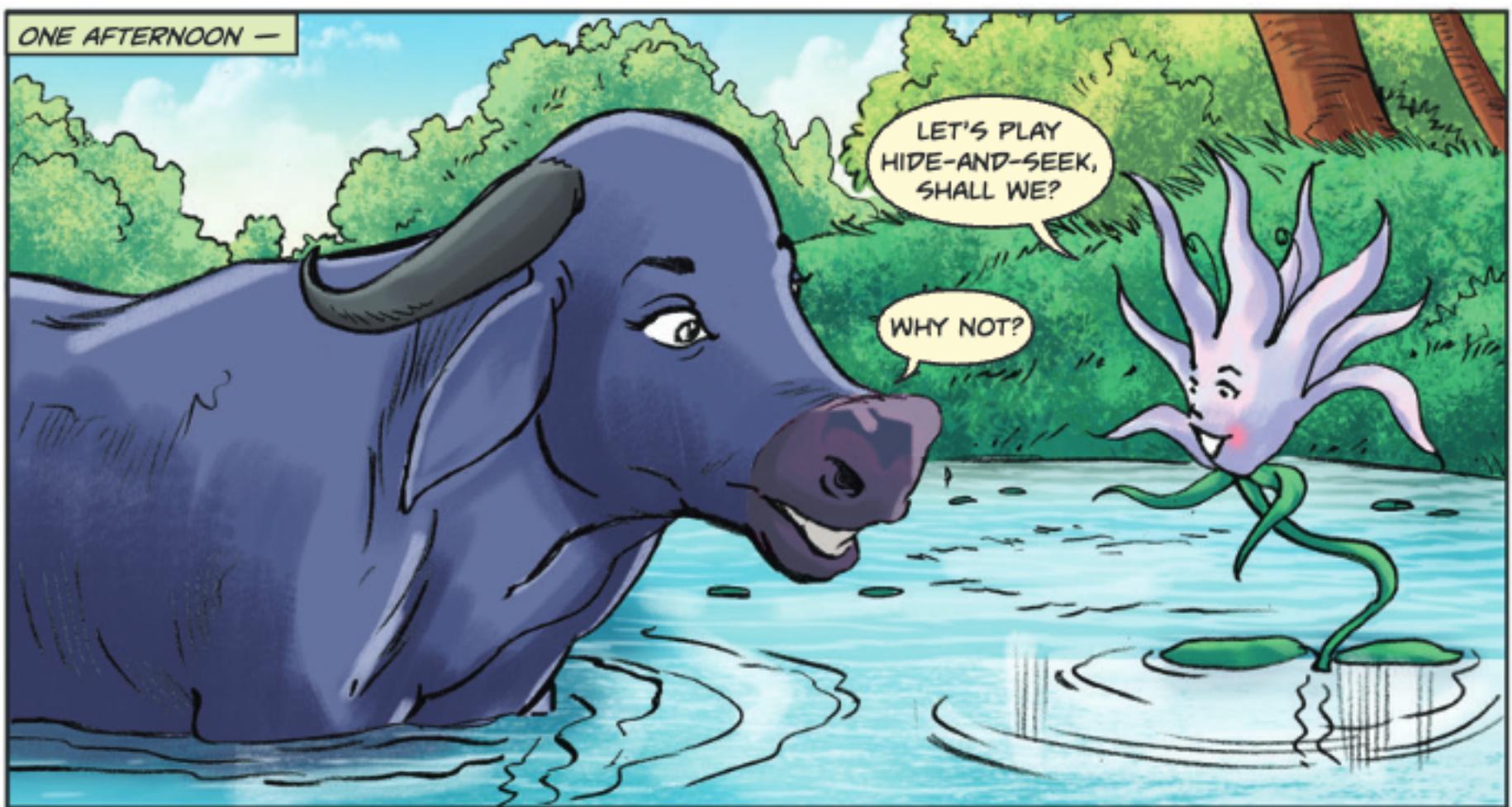
HOME, SWEET HOME, HERE WE COME!



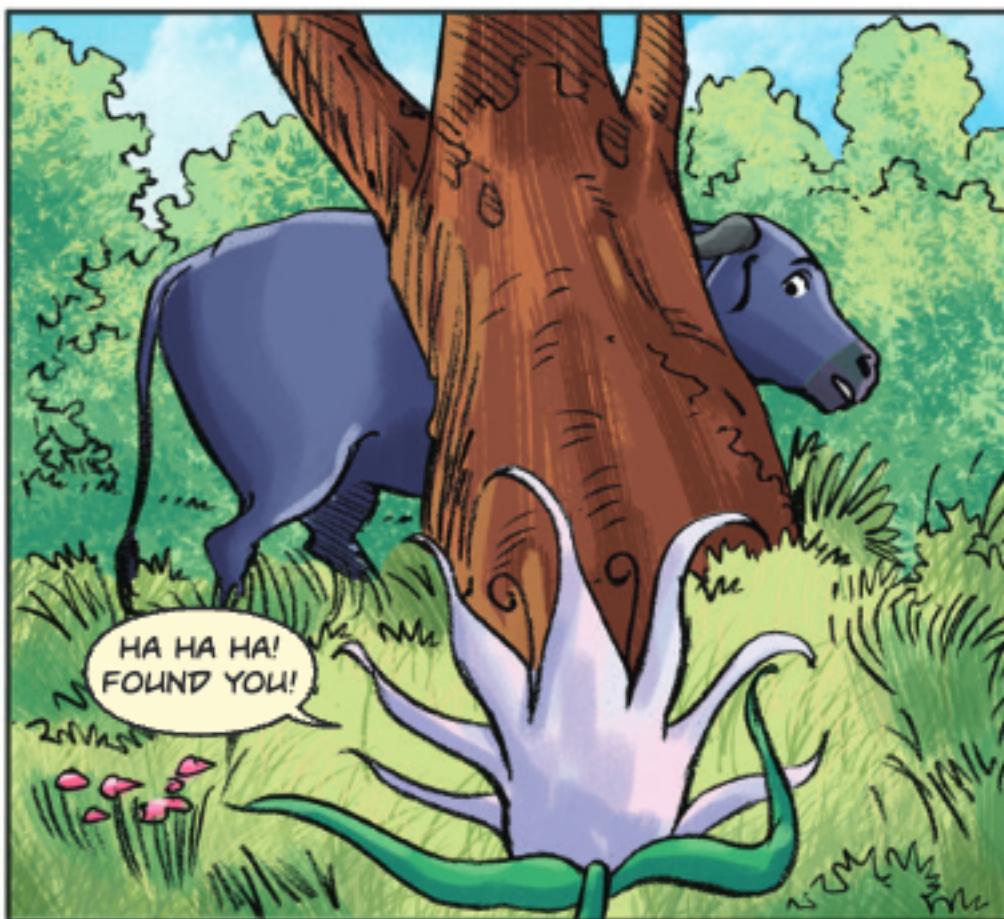
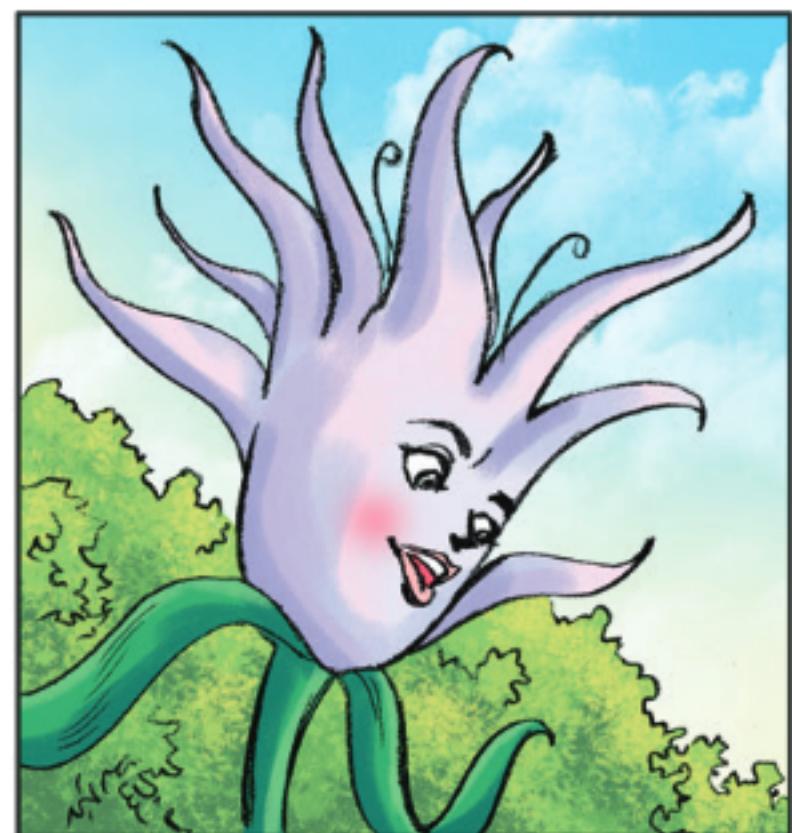
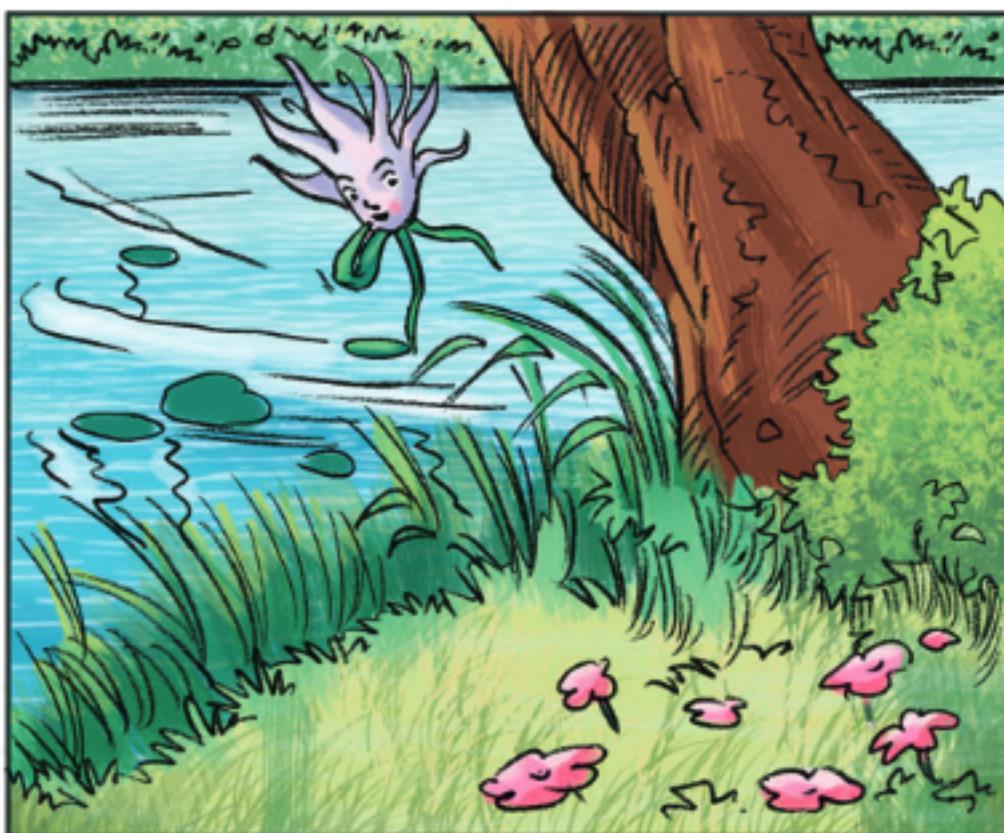
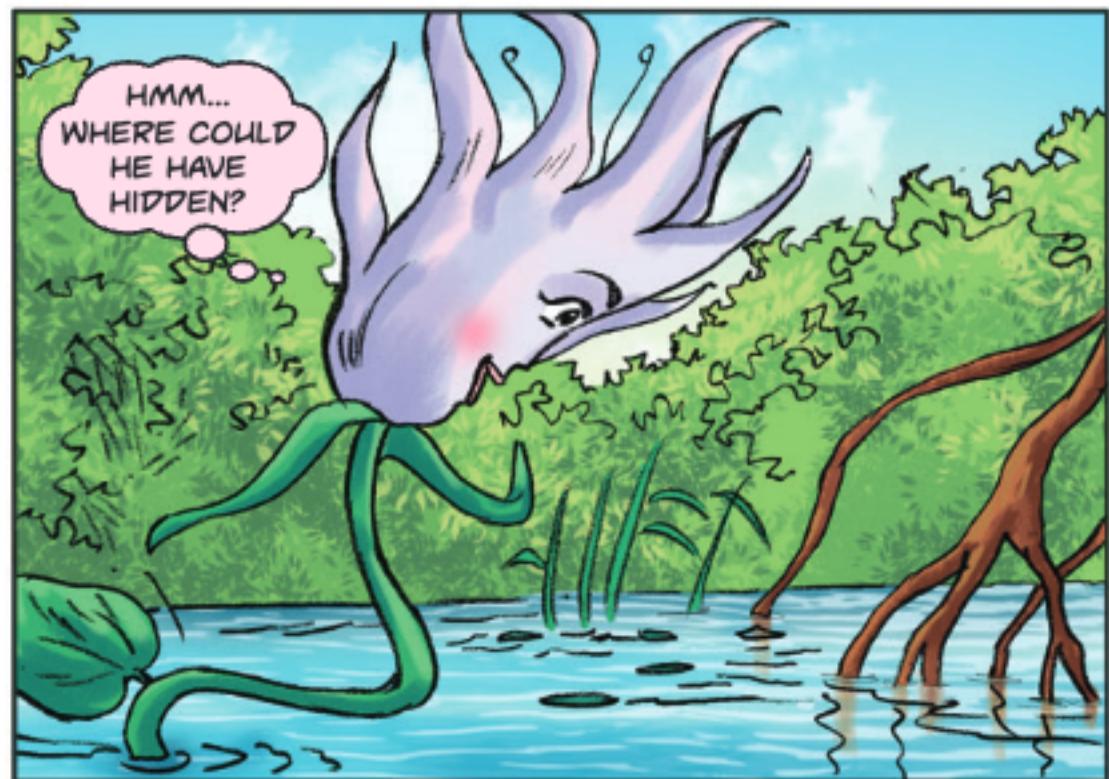
# SMELLY LILY

ONCE UPON A TIME, LILY AND BUFFALO WERE FRIENDS.



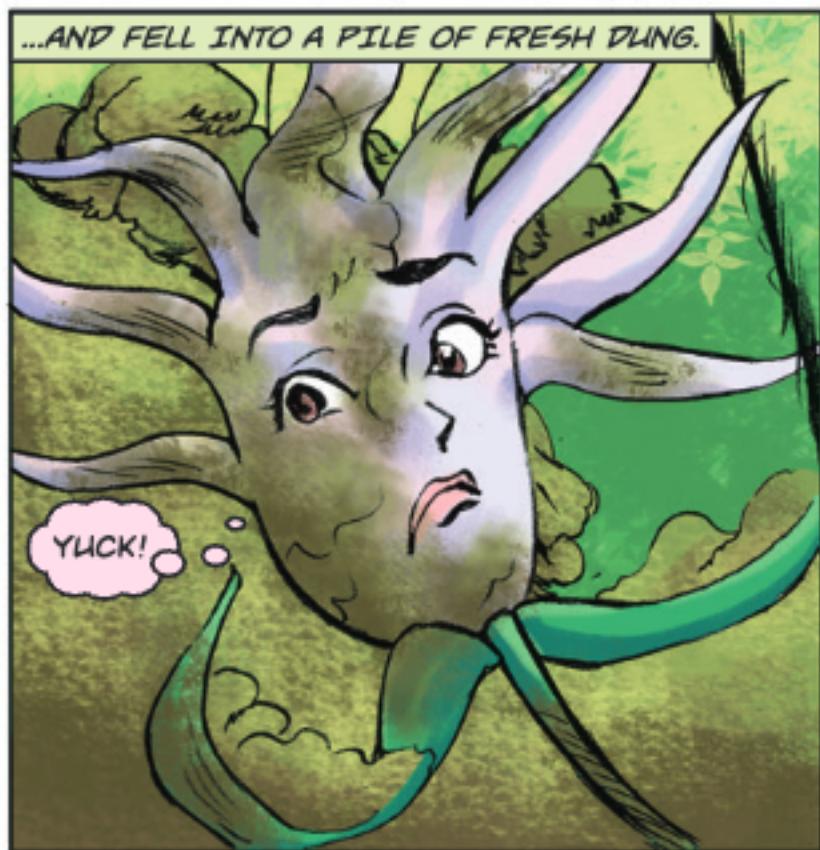


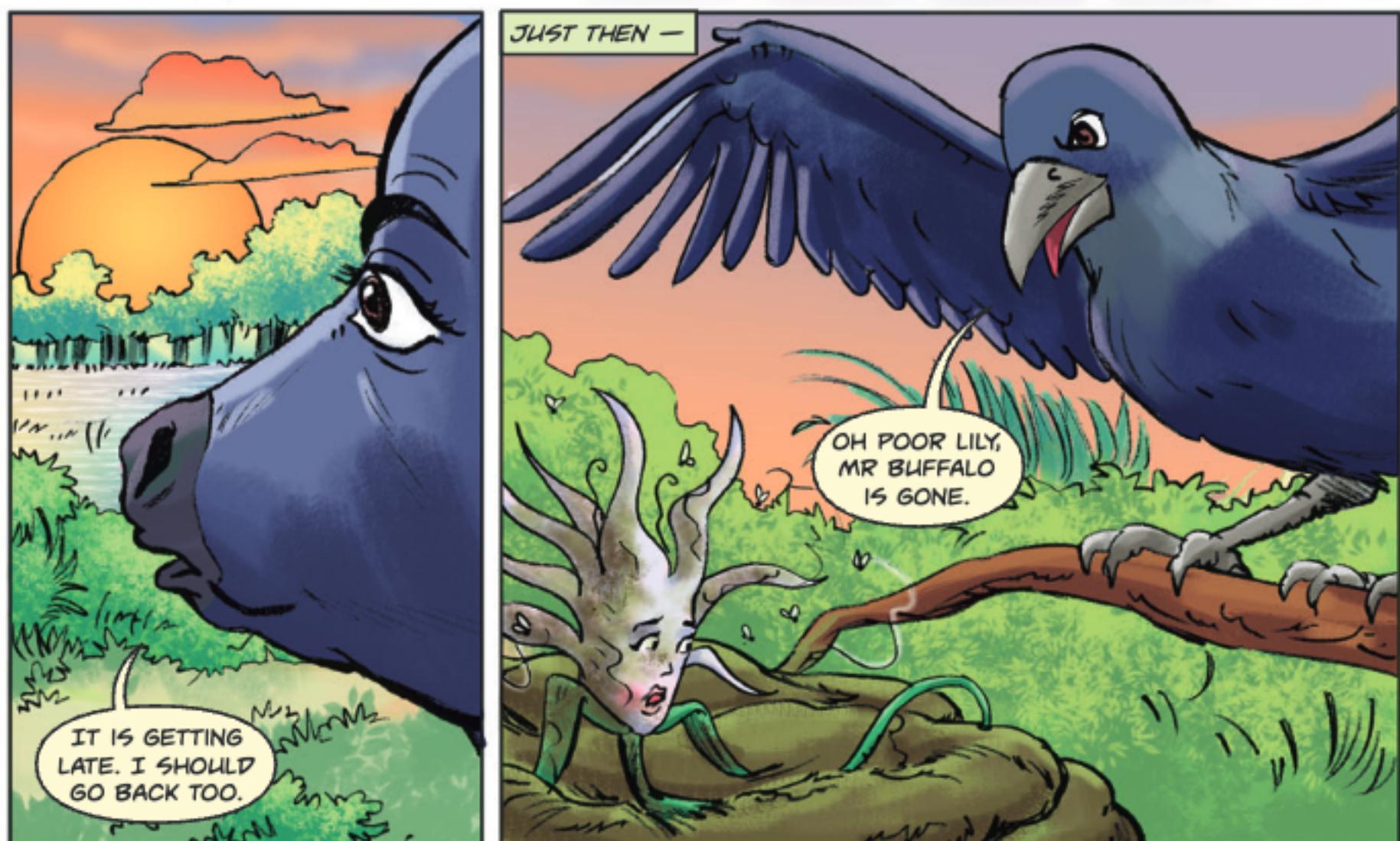
SMELLY LILY



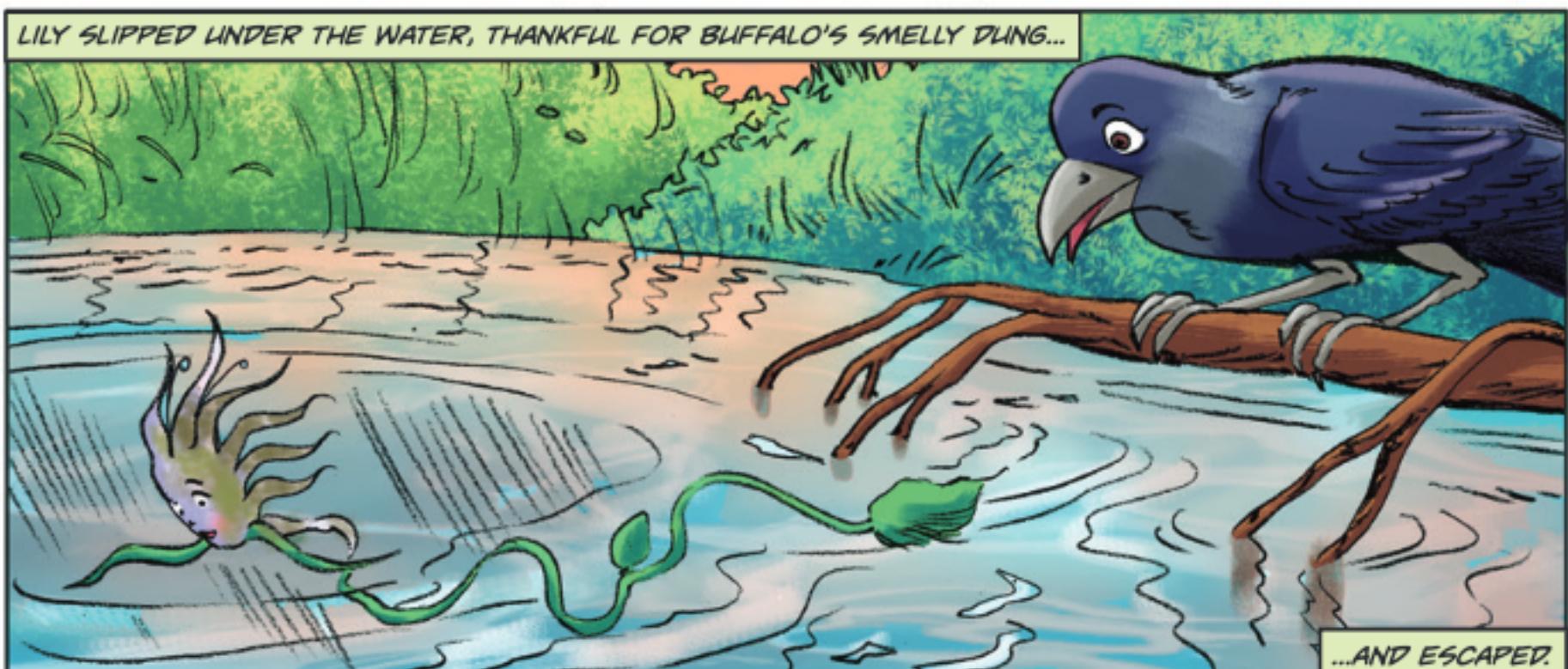
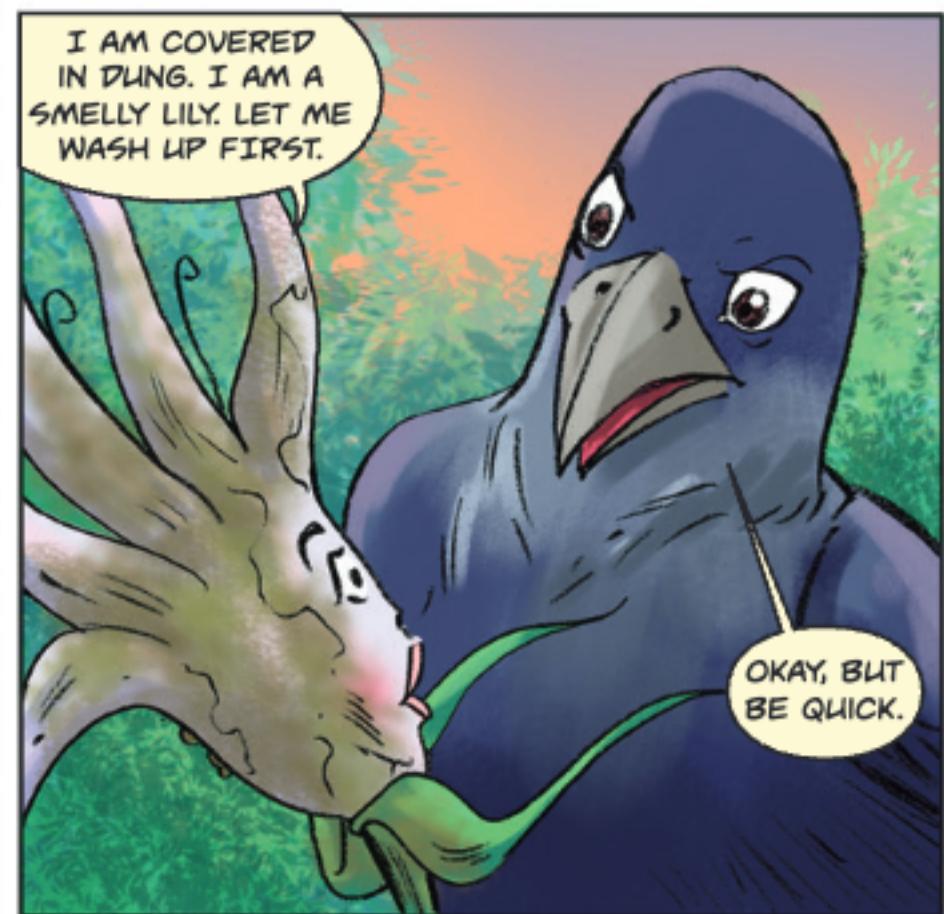
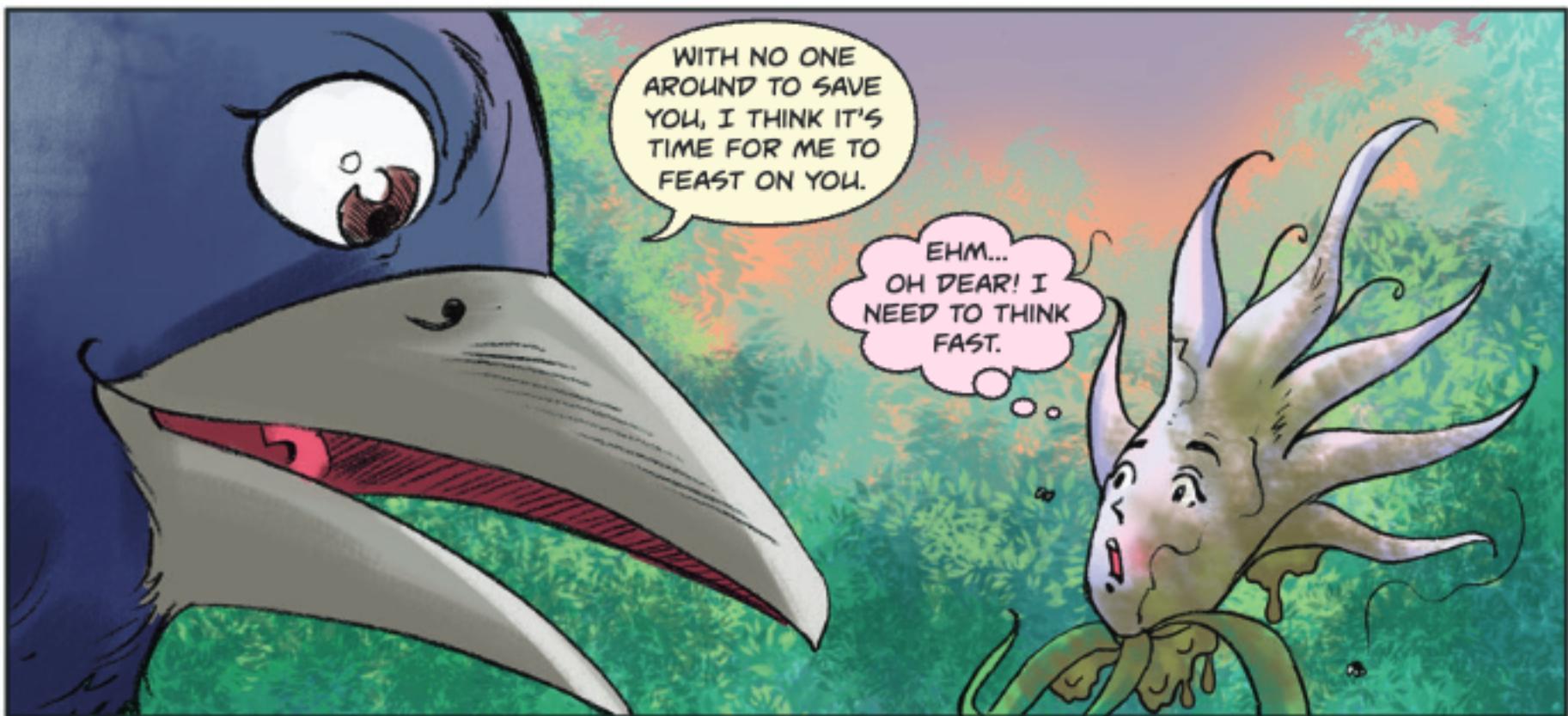


## SMELLY LILY





SMELLY LILY



# THE CROCODILE AND THE FOX

ONCE, IN A DENSE JUNGLE, THERE RAN A WIDE RIVER THAT WAS HOME TO MANY CROCODILES. ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER, THERE ALSO LIVED A CLEVER FOX.

EVERY DAY, THE FOX WOULD CROSS THE RIVER TO GO AND FIND FOOD ON THE OTHER SIDE.

THIS FOX LOOKS SO DELICIOUS! I'M SURE I CAN CATCH HIM WHILE HE CROSSES THE RIVER. HE WOULD MAKE A YUMMY MEAL.

ONE DAY —

OWWW, A CROCODILE HAS CAUGHT MY LEG! I'LL HAVE TO THINK FAST OR I'LL BE A THREE-LEGGED FOX!

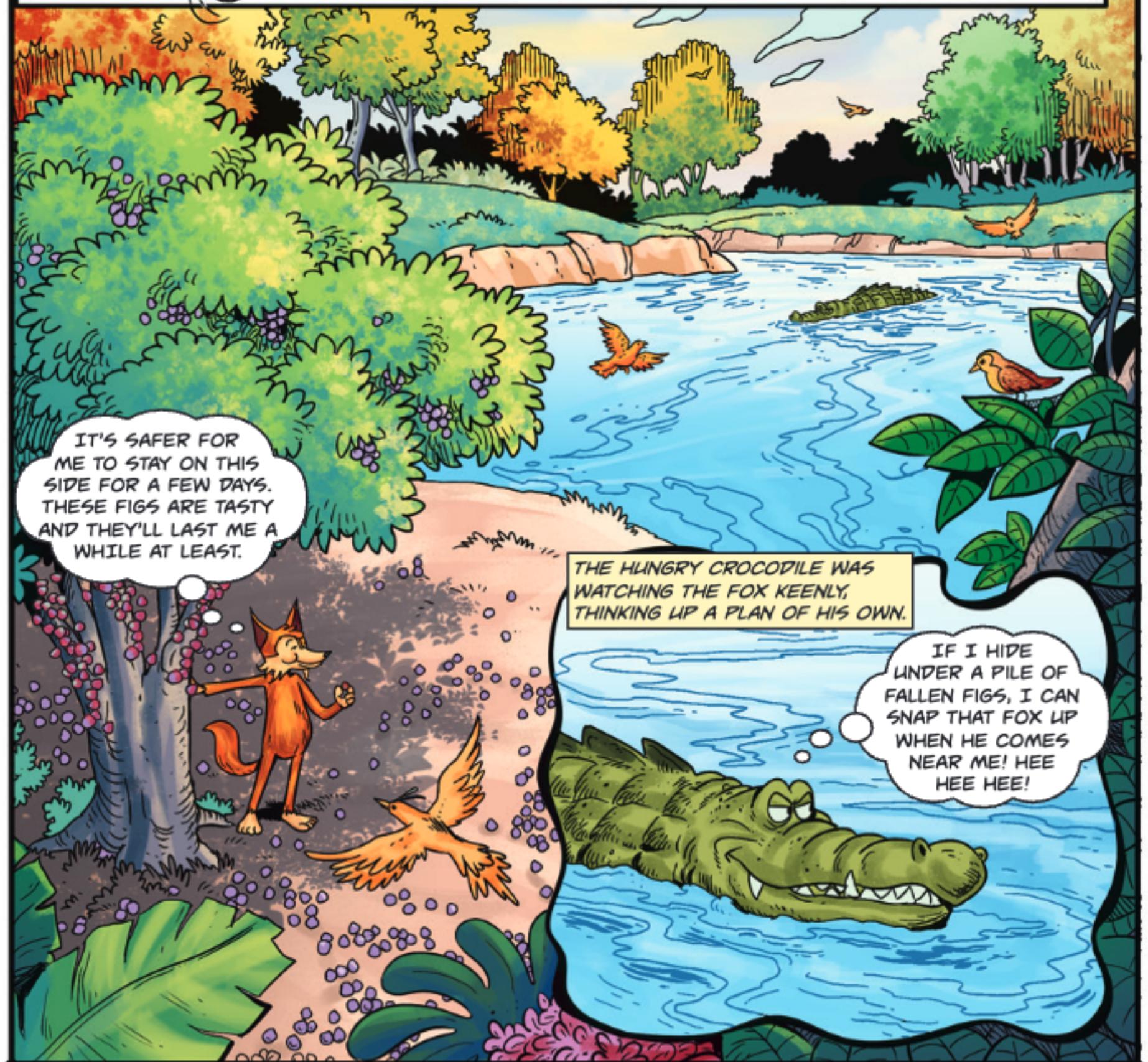
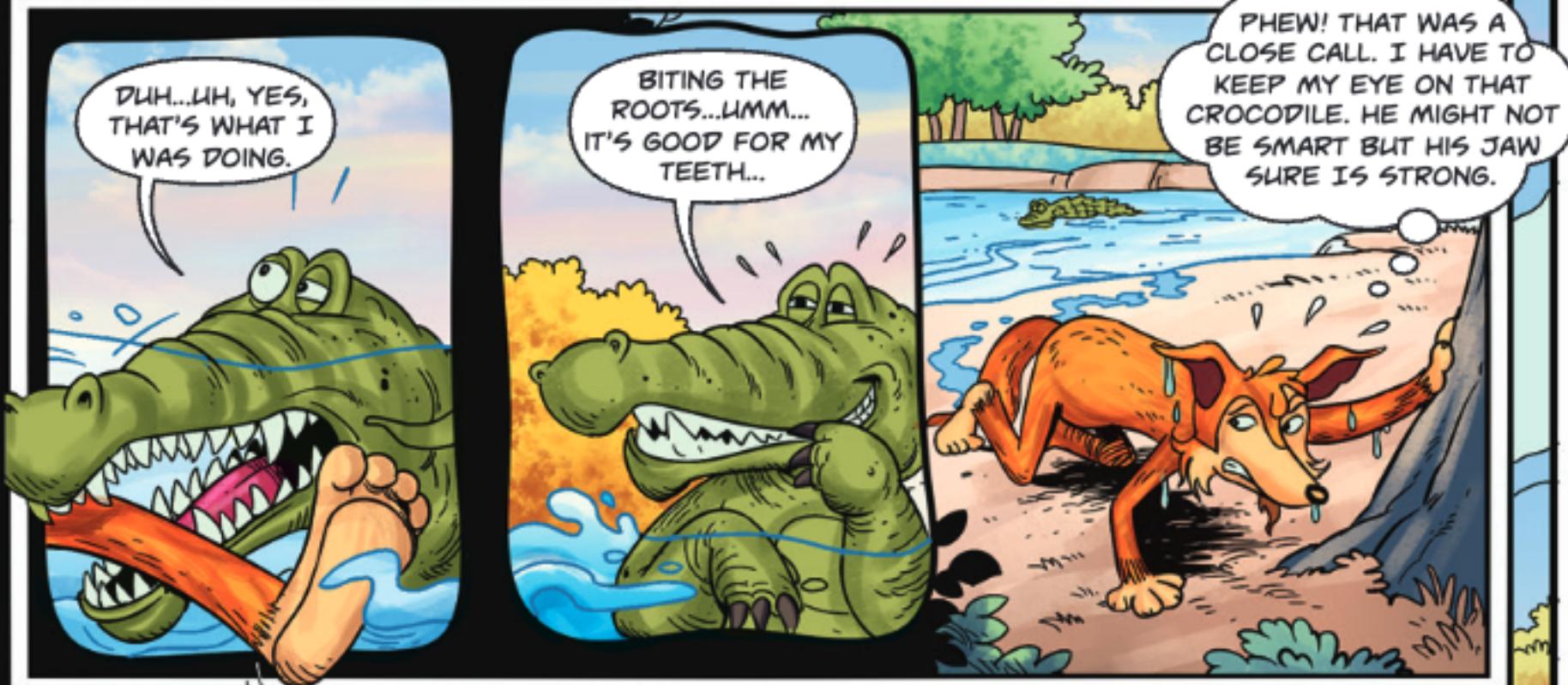
SO —

CROCODILE, WHY ARE YOU BITING A ROOT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER? ARE YOU TRYING TO SHARPEN YOUR TEETH?

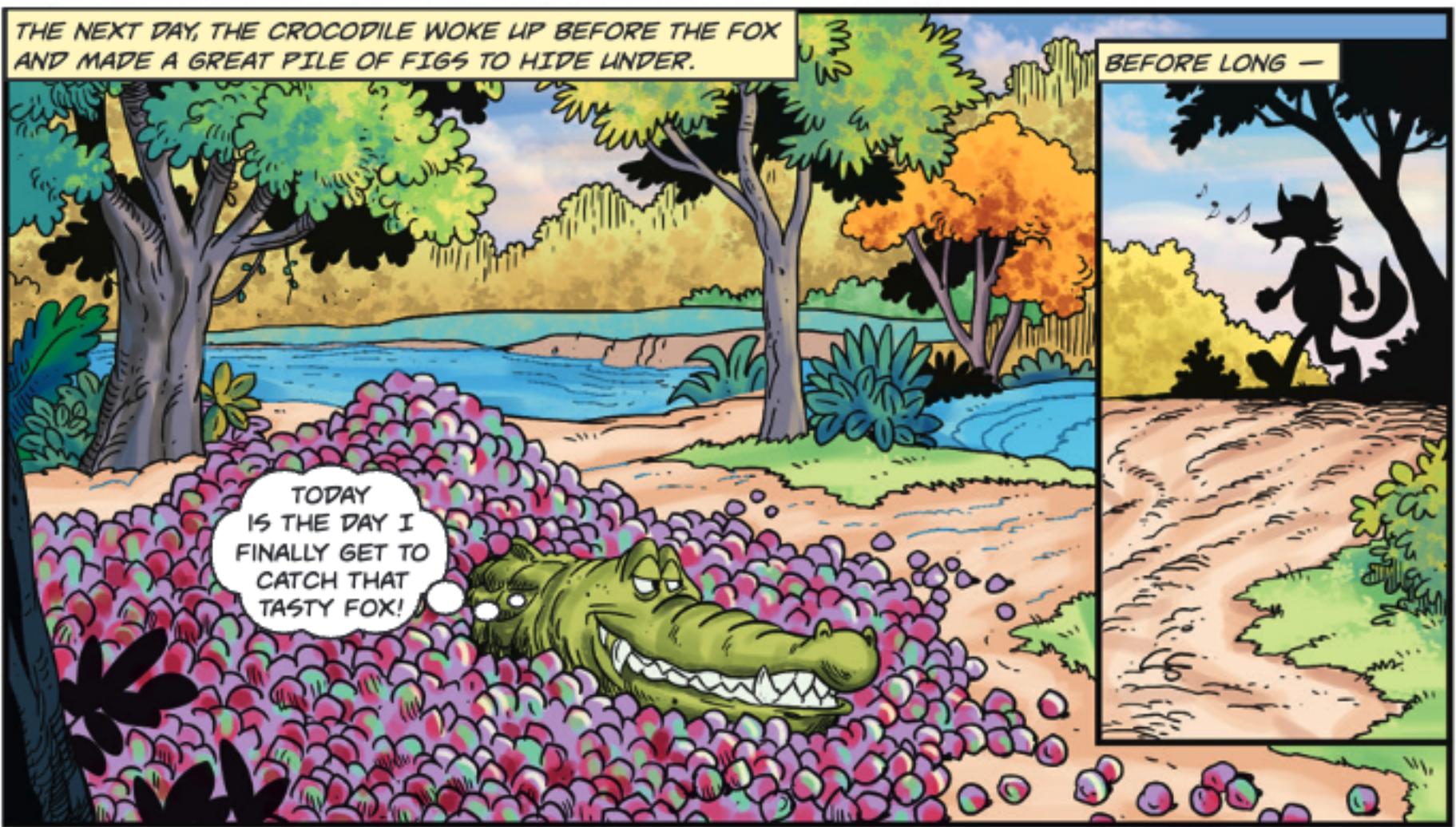


## THE CROCODILE AND THE FOX

THE CROCODILE FELL FOR THE FOX'S TRICK.

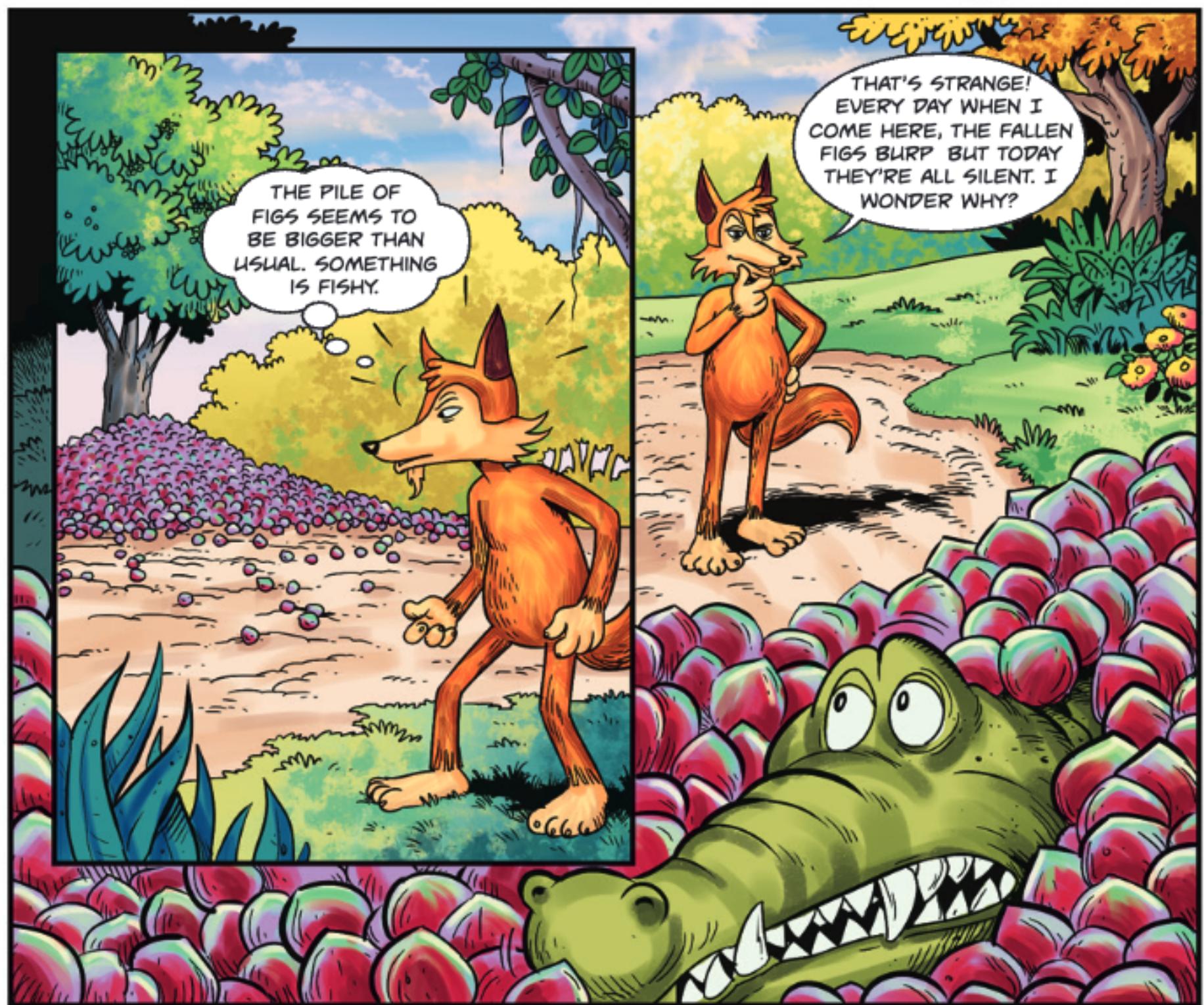


THE NEXT DAY, THE CROCODILE WOKE UP BEFORE THE FOX AND MADE A GREAT PILE OF FIGS TO HIDE UNDER.

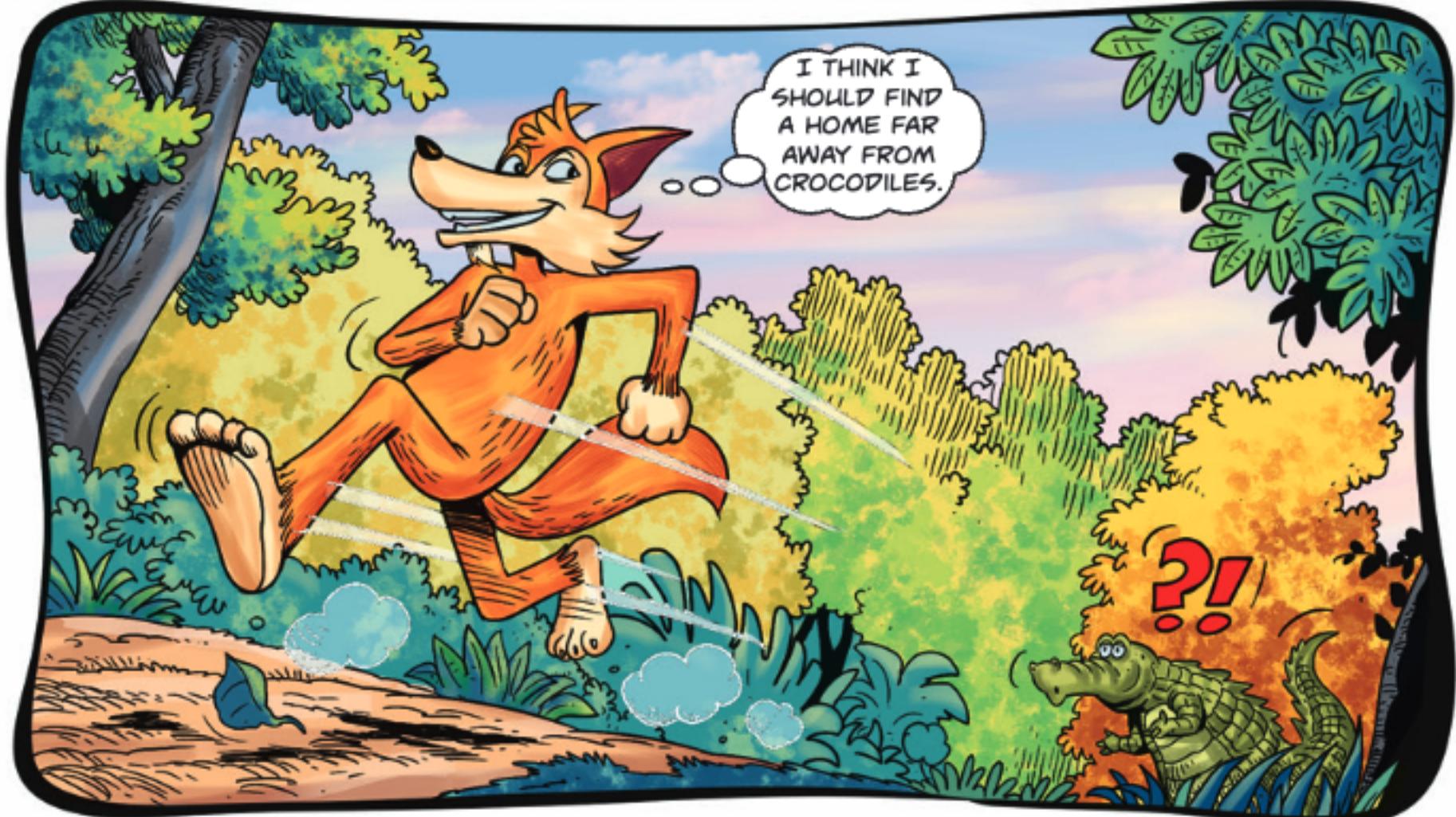
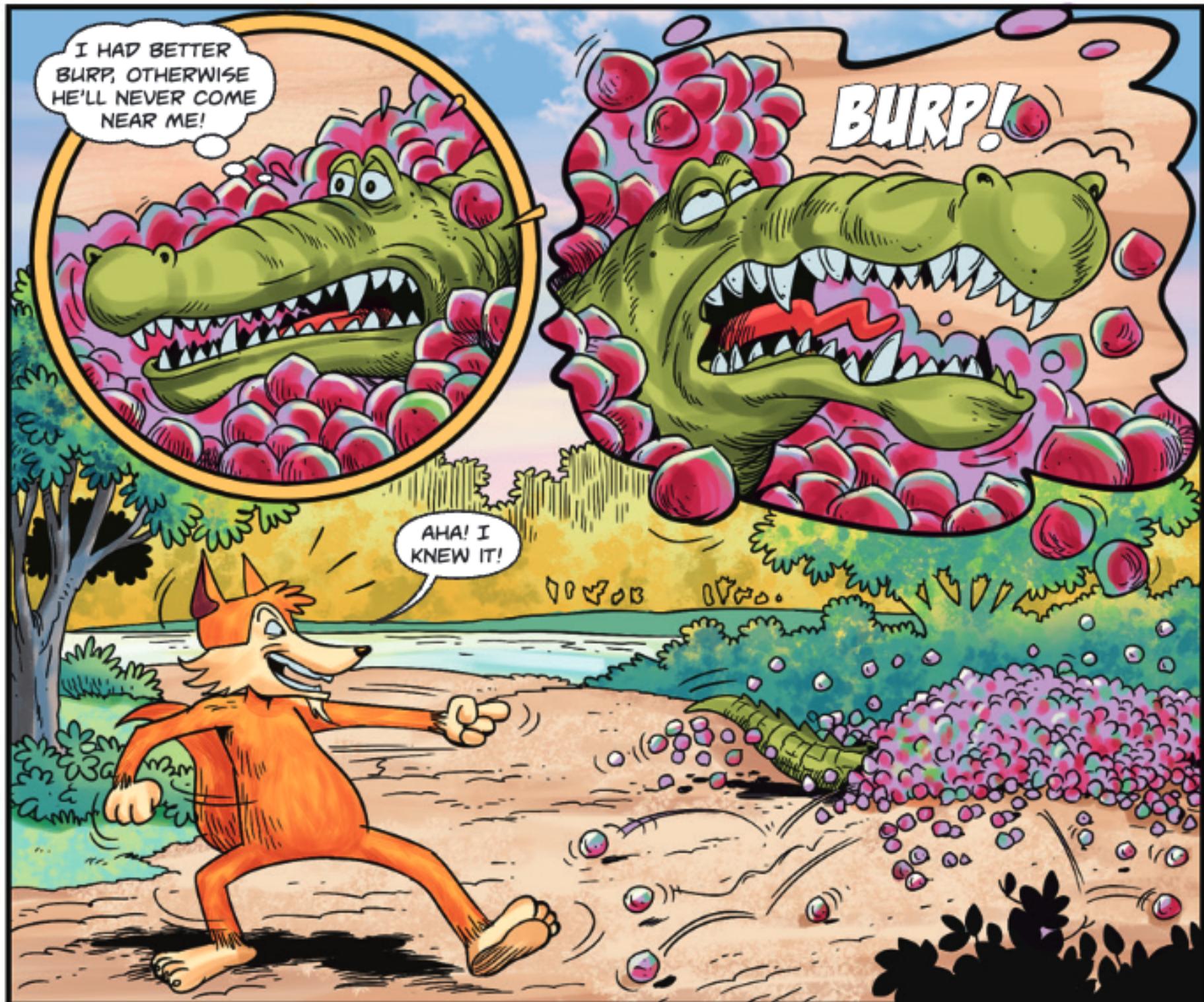


THE PILE OF  
FIGS SEEMS TO  
BE BIGGER THAN  
USUAL. SOMETHING  
IS FISHY.

THAT'S STRANGE!  
EVERY DAY WHEN I  
COME HERE, THE  
FALLEN FIGS  
BURP BUT TODAY  
THEY'RE ALL SILENT.  
I WONDER WHY?

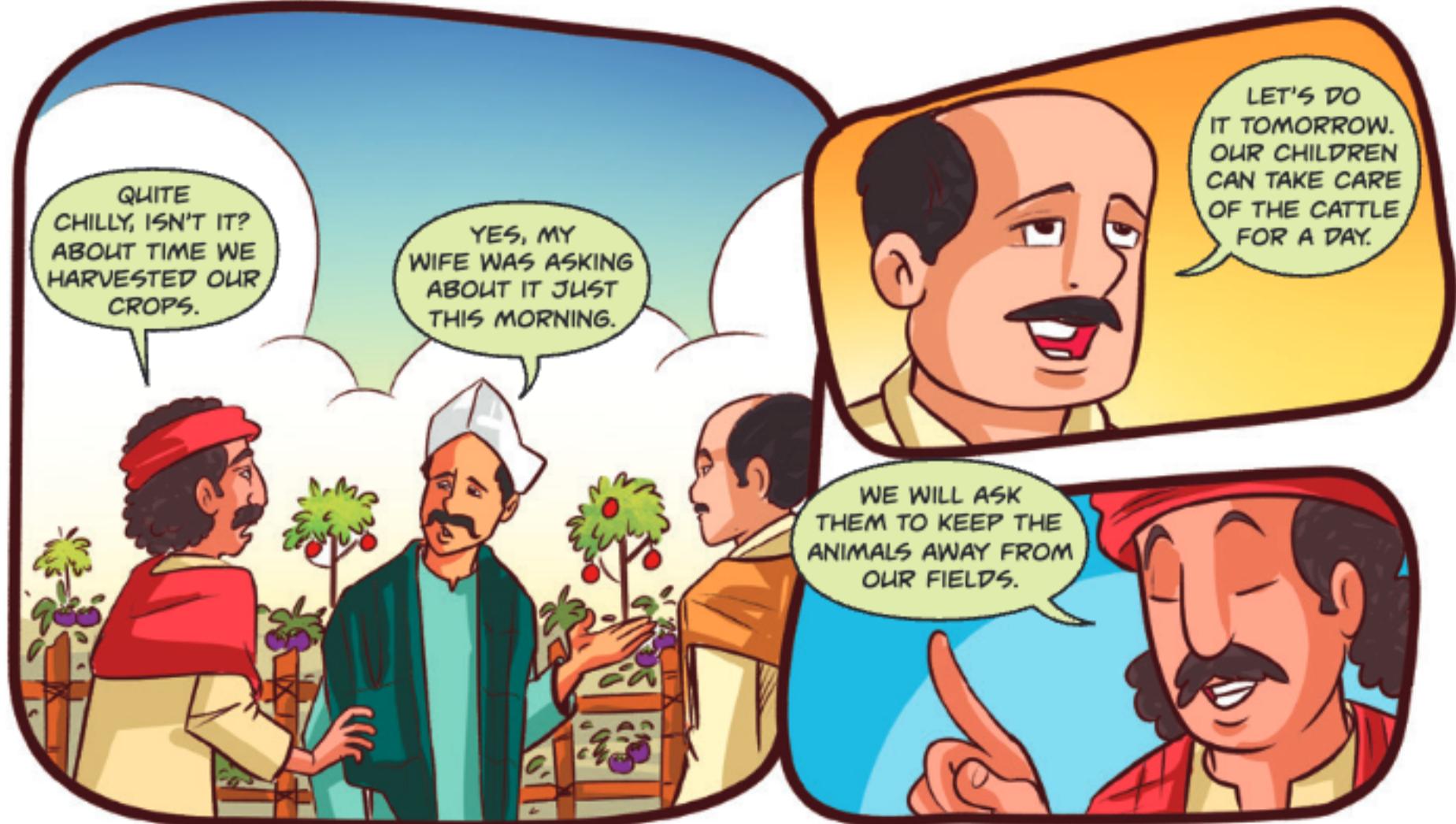
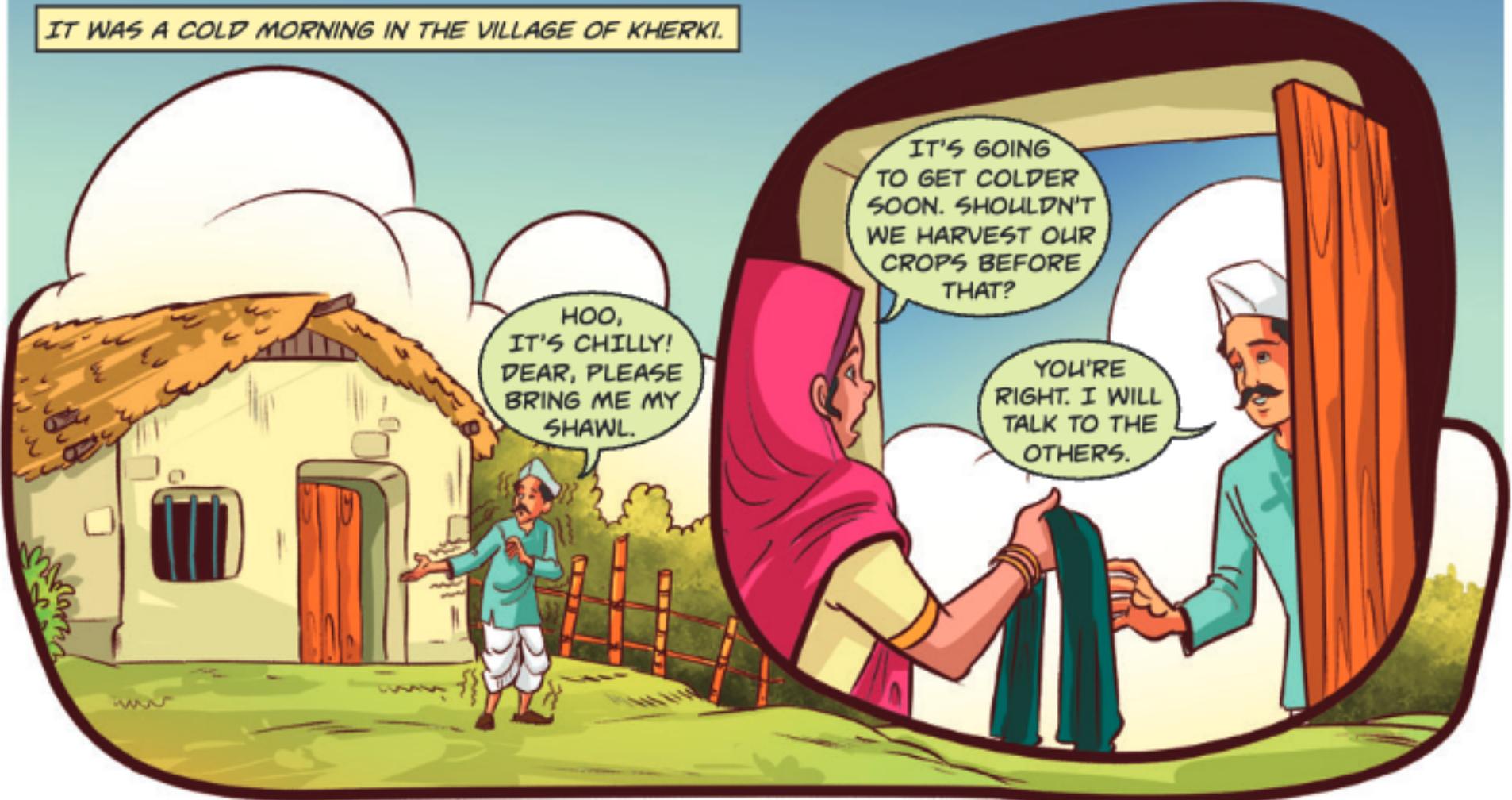


THE CROCODILE AND THE FOX



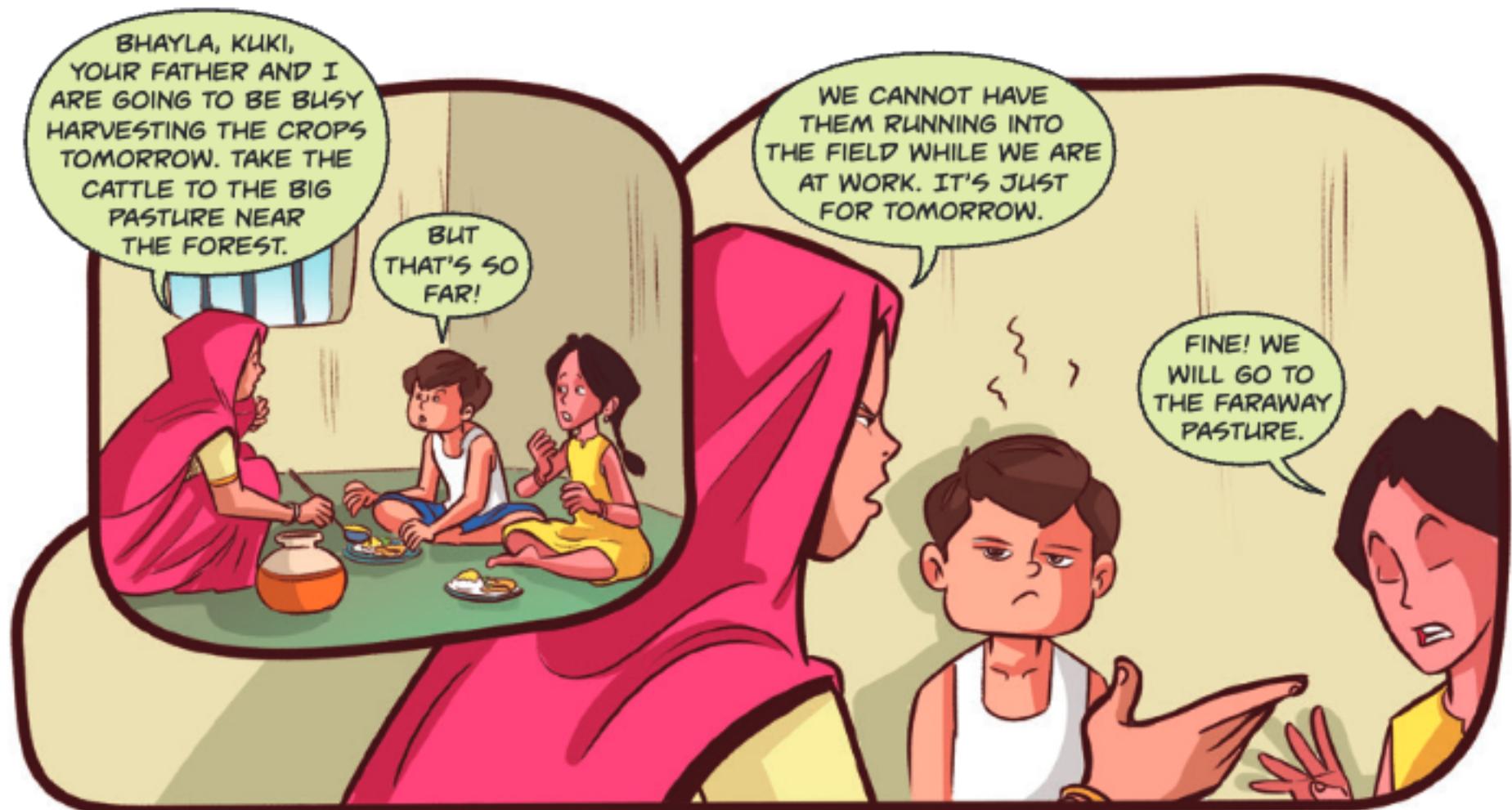
# THE CARELESS CHILDREN

IT WAS A COLD MORNING IN THE VILLAGE OF KHERKI.



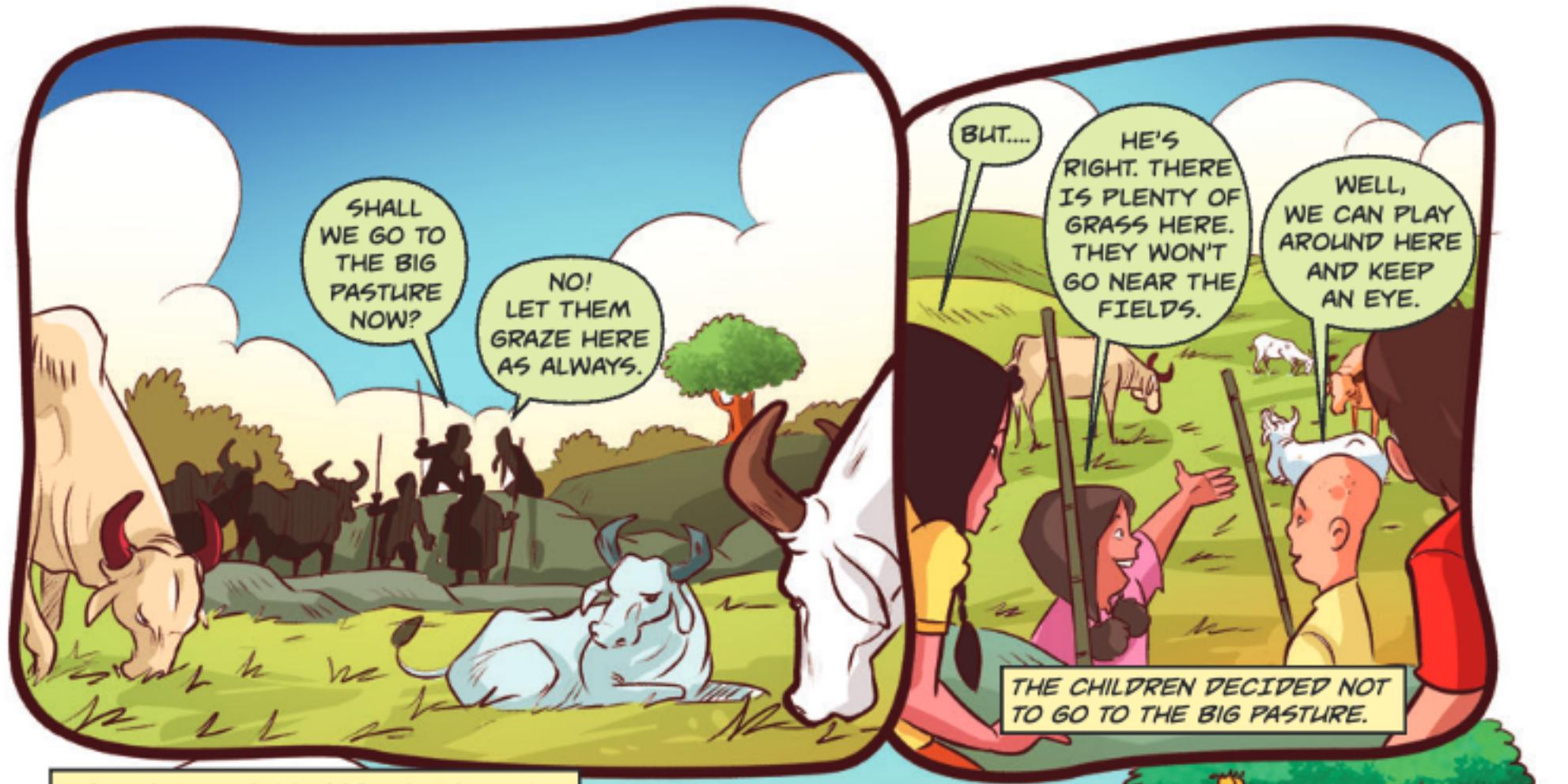
## THE CARELESS CHILDREN

THAT NIGHT —



EARLY NEXT MORNING —





AS THE CATTLE GRAZED PEACEFULLY —



\*A GAME PLAYED WITH TWO STICKS; A LARGE ONE, CALLED A DANDA, IS USED TO HIT A SMALLER ONE, THE GILLI





## THE CARELESS CHILDREN

WHEN THEY REACHED THE PASTURE —

WHERE  
ARE OUR  
CATTLE?

ISN'T  
THIS WHERE  
WE LEFT  
THEM?

THE FOUR SEARCHED FAR AND WIDE.

THEY ARE  
NOT HERE.  
LET'S CHECK  
THAT WAY.

PERHAPS  
THEY WENT TO  
THE BIGGER  
PASTURE.

OH NO!  
THEY ARE  
ALL IN THE  
FIELD!

MEANWHILE —

PAHADsing!  
YOUR COWS  
AND GOATS HAVE  
DESTROYED MY  
CROP!

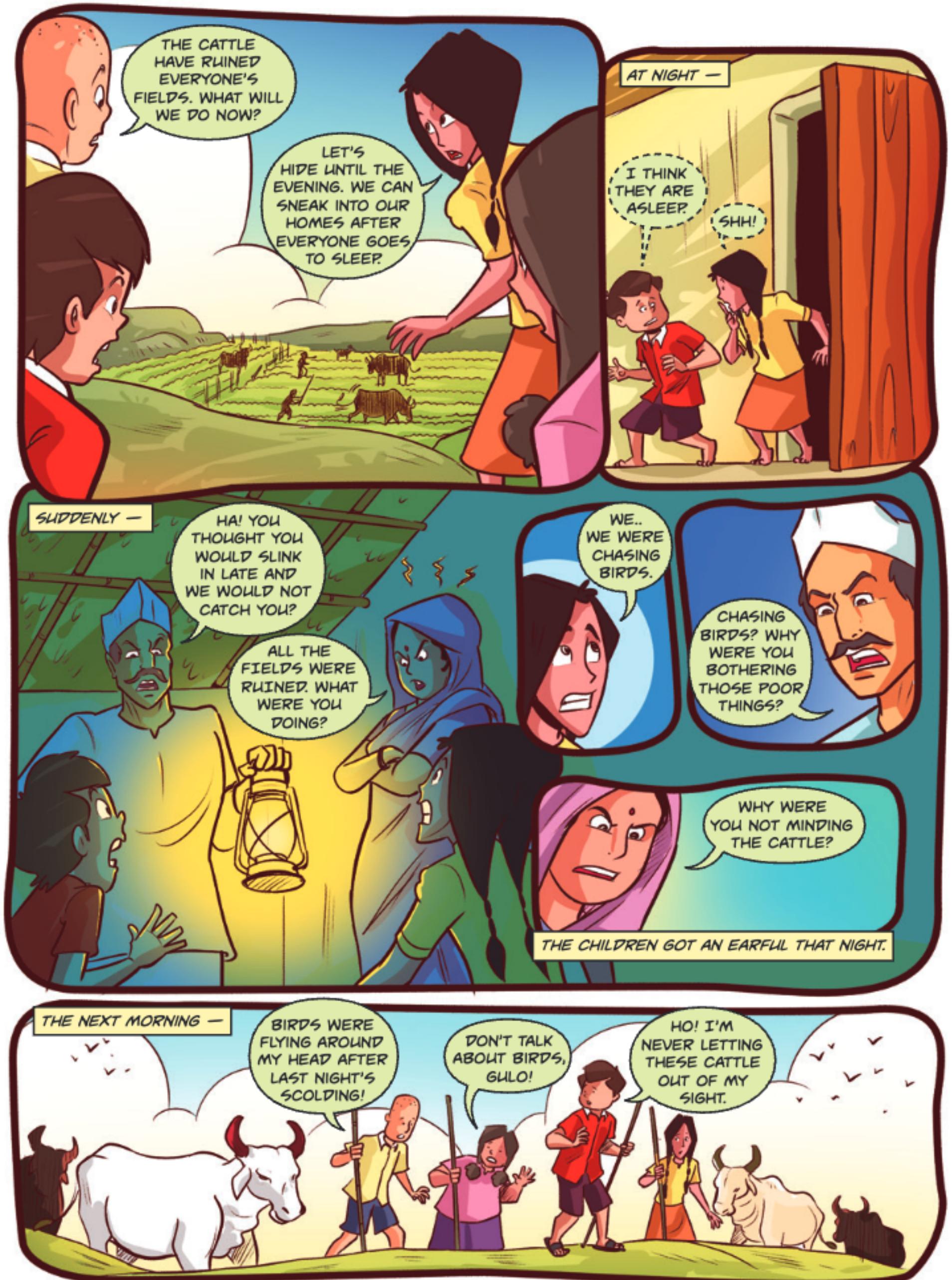
WHAT? THAT'S  
NOT POSSIBLE.  
MY CHILDREN TOOK  
THE ANIMALS AWAY  
TO GRAZE NEAR  
THE FOREST.

COME  
WITH ME.

THEN  
WHOSE  
ANIMALS ARE  
THESE?

OH  
THESE....

UFF! THOSE  
DISOBEDIENT KIDS!  
I WILL TEACH THEM  
A LESSON.



# AN UNLIKELY TRADE

ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A SMALL VILLAGE, THERE LIVED AN OLD COUPLE, BURASING AND GUNJALI.

THE RAINS HAVE DESERTED US AGAIN THIS YEAR. WE HAVE NO GRAINS AND NO MONEY. HOW WILL WE SURVIVE?

WE HAVE ONLY ONE THING WORTH ANY VALUE — OUR COW. IF WE SELL HER, WE COULD GET THROUGH THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

YES, THAT IS A GOOD IDEA! I'LL TAKE HER TO THE CATTLE FAIR IN THE NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE.

I THINK 30 SILVER COINS IS A REASONABLE PRICE. AFTER ALL, SHE IS STILL YOUNG AND HEALTHY.

EARLY NEXT DAY, BURASING SET OUT TO FOR THE CATTLE FAIR. AFTER WALKING FOR A WHILE —

OH, IT'S SO HOT! THE CATTLE FAIR IS STILL SO FAR AWAY. I SHOULD TAKE A LITTLE NAP UNDER THAT TREE AND REGAIN MY ENERGY.

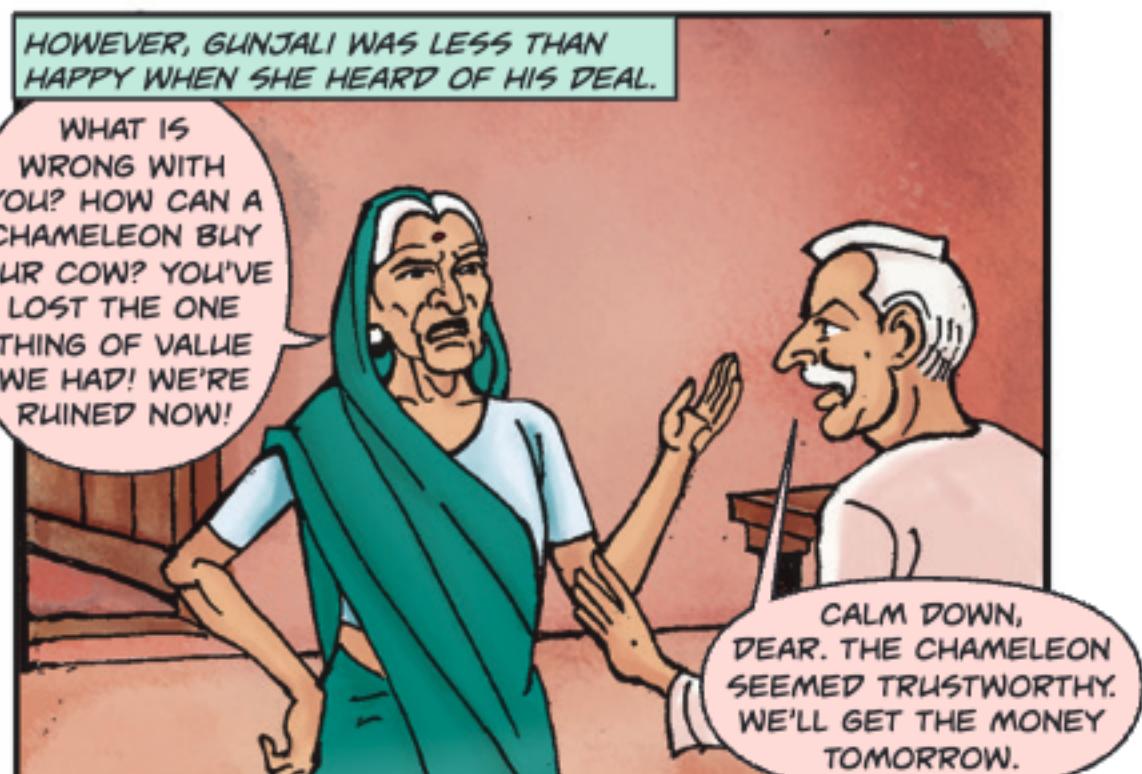
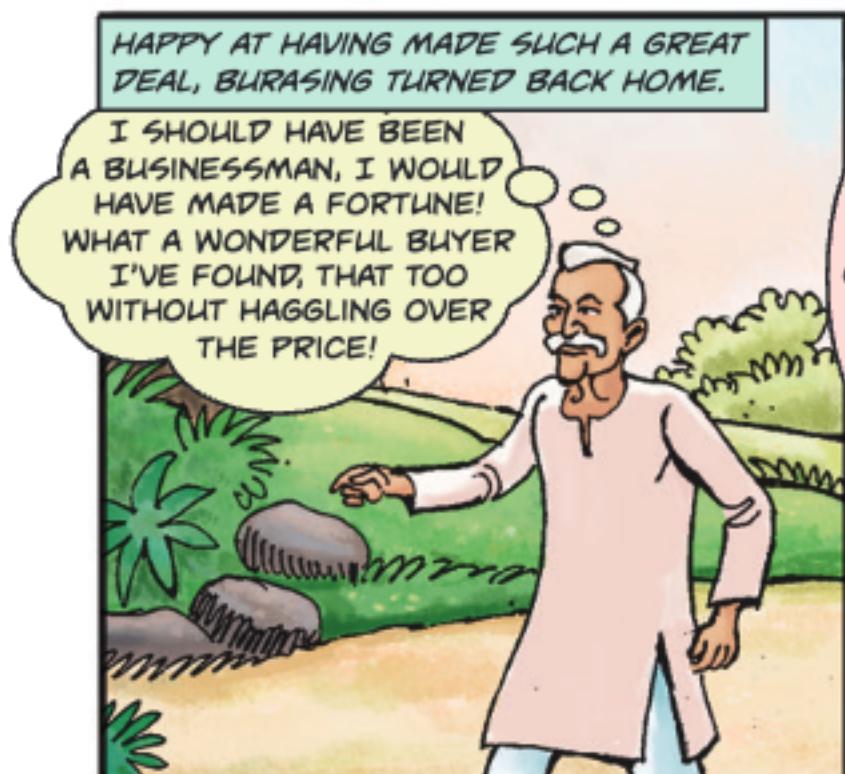
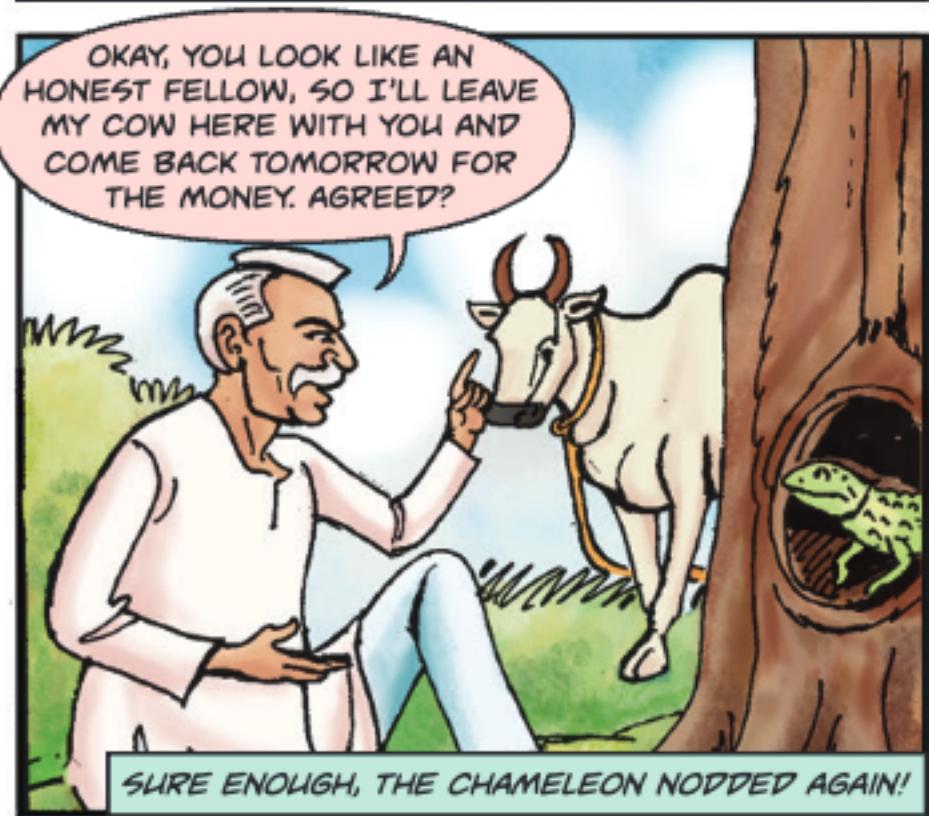
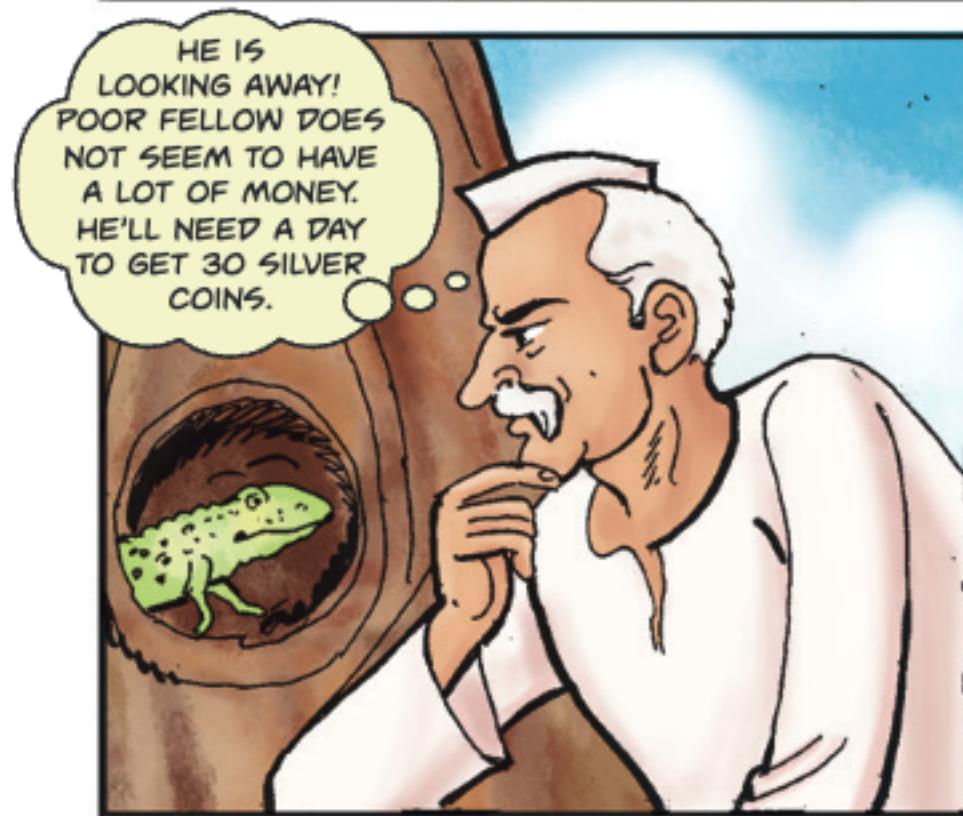
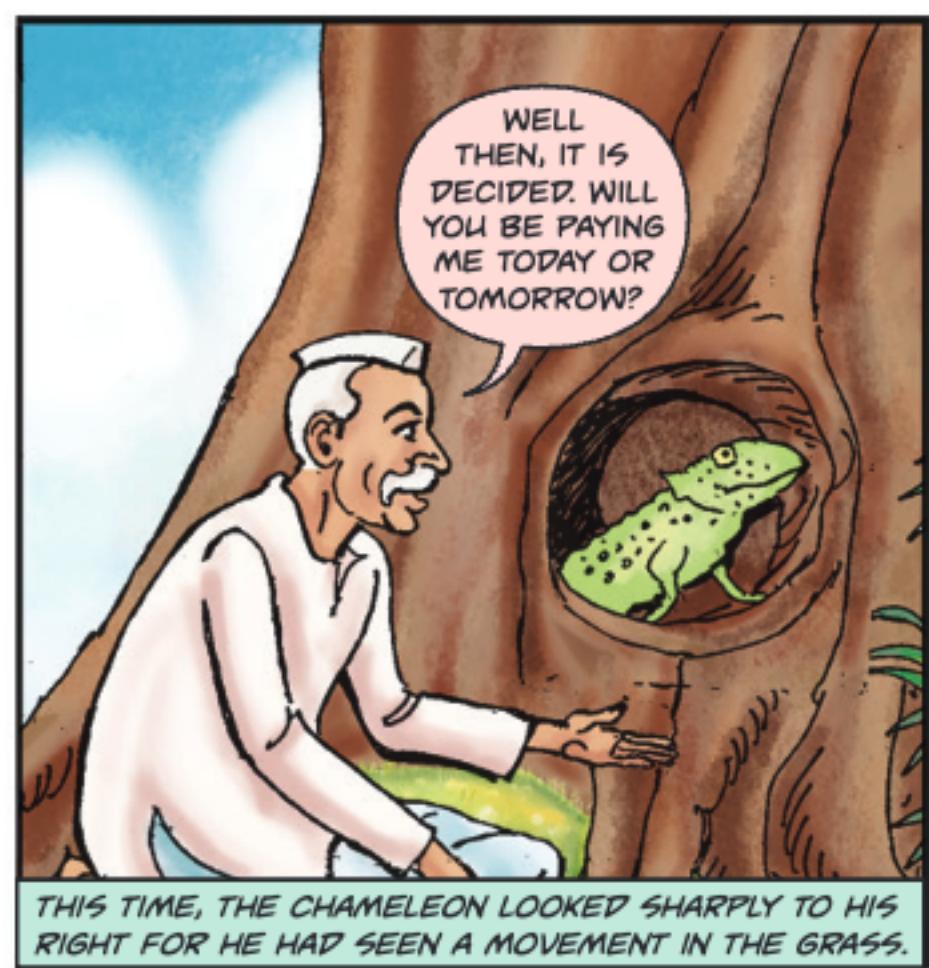
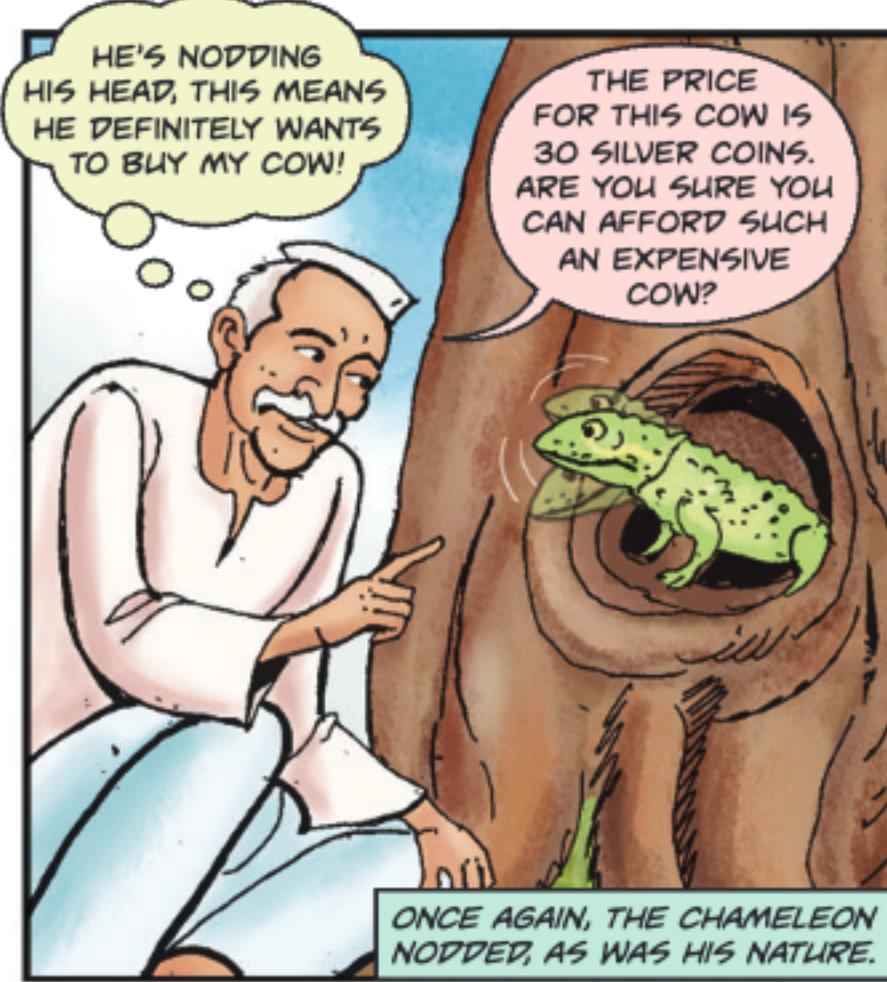
AS BURASING SETTLED DOWN FOR A NAP, HE SAW SOMETHING FROM THE CORNER OF HIS EYE.

LOOK AT THAT CHAMELEON! HE'S STARING AT OUR COW SO INTENTLY. SURELY HE IS INTERESTED IN BUYING HER.

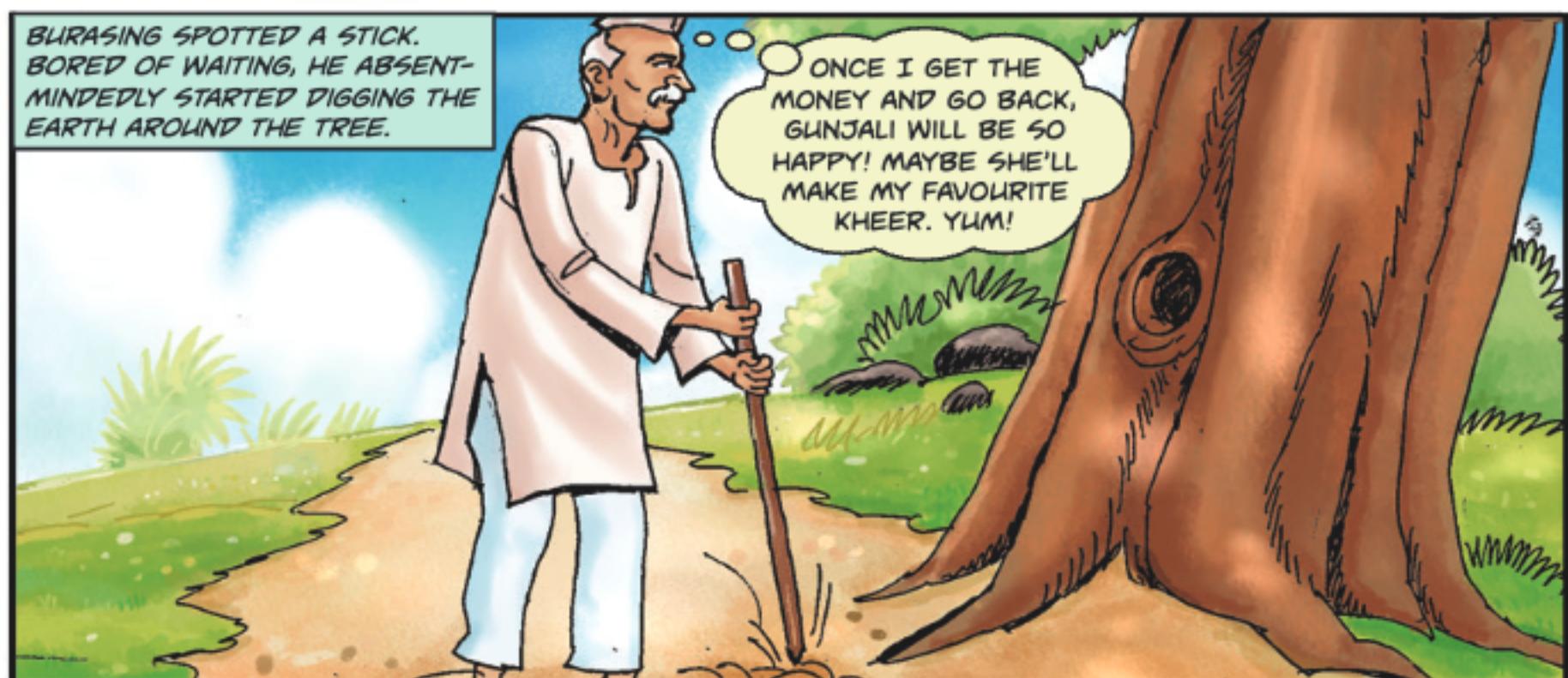
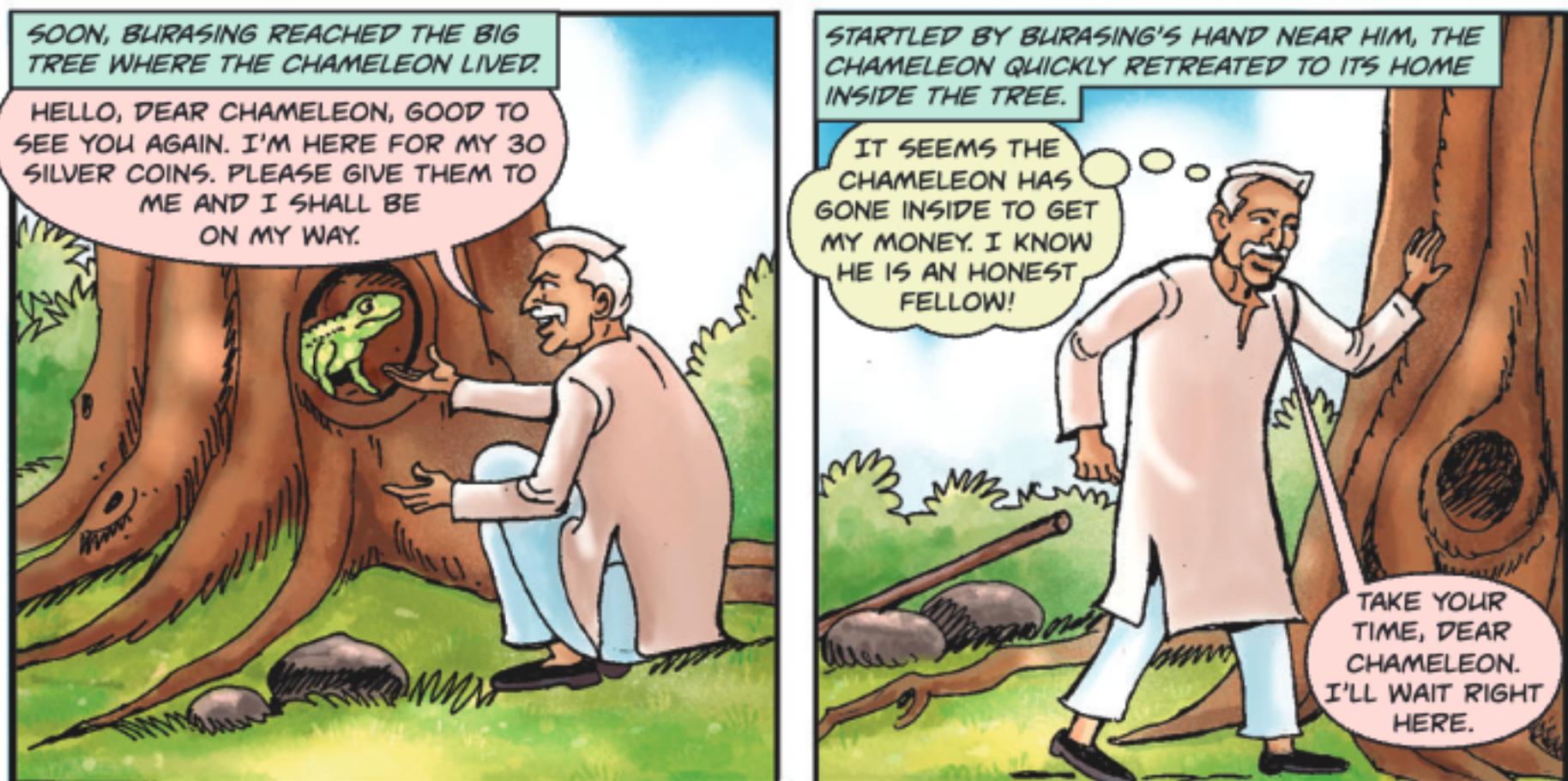
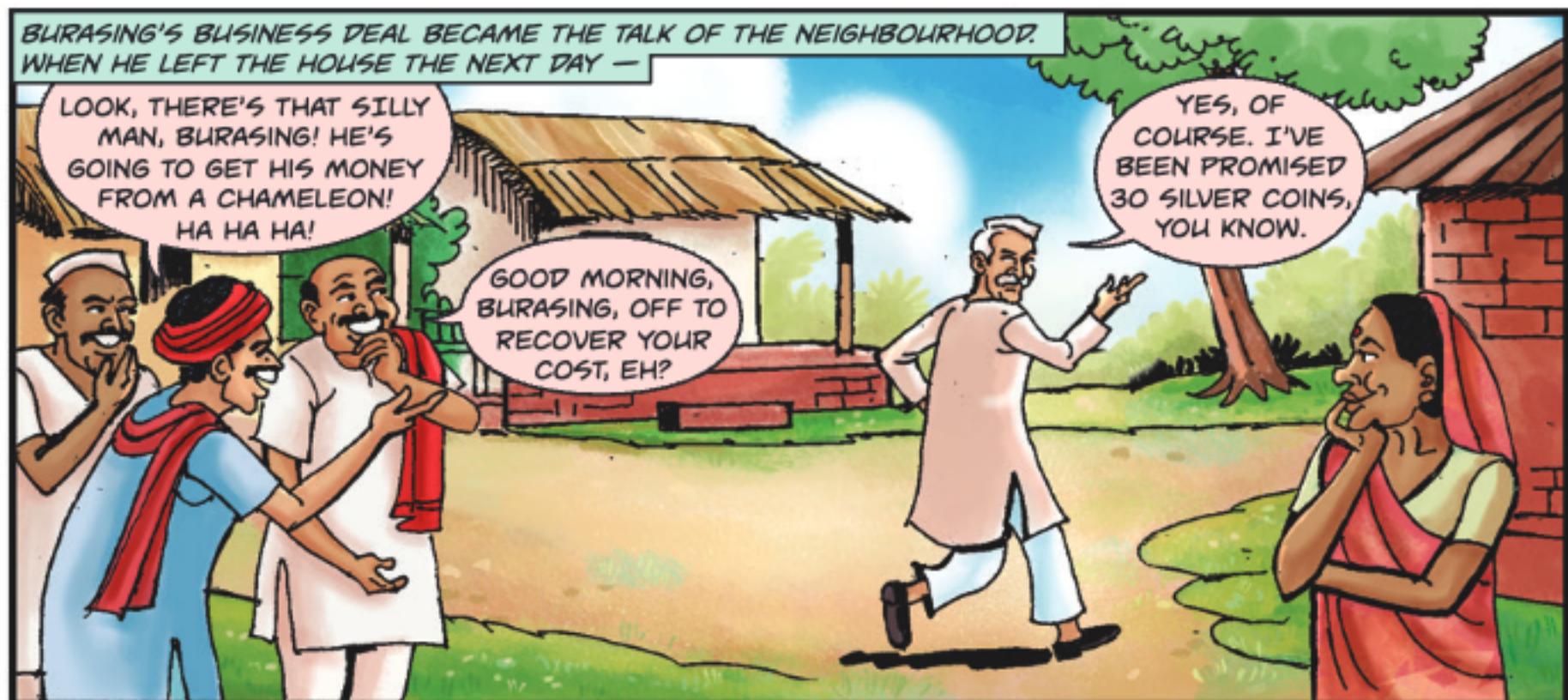
IF I CAN SELL THE COW TO THIS CHAMELEON, THEN I DON'T HAVE TO WALK ALL THE WAY TO THE NEXT VILLAGE.

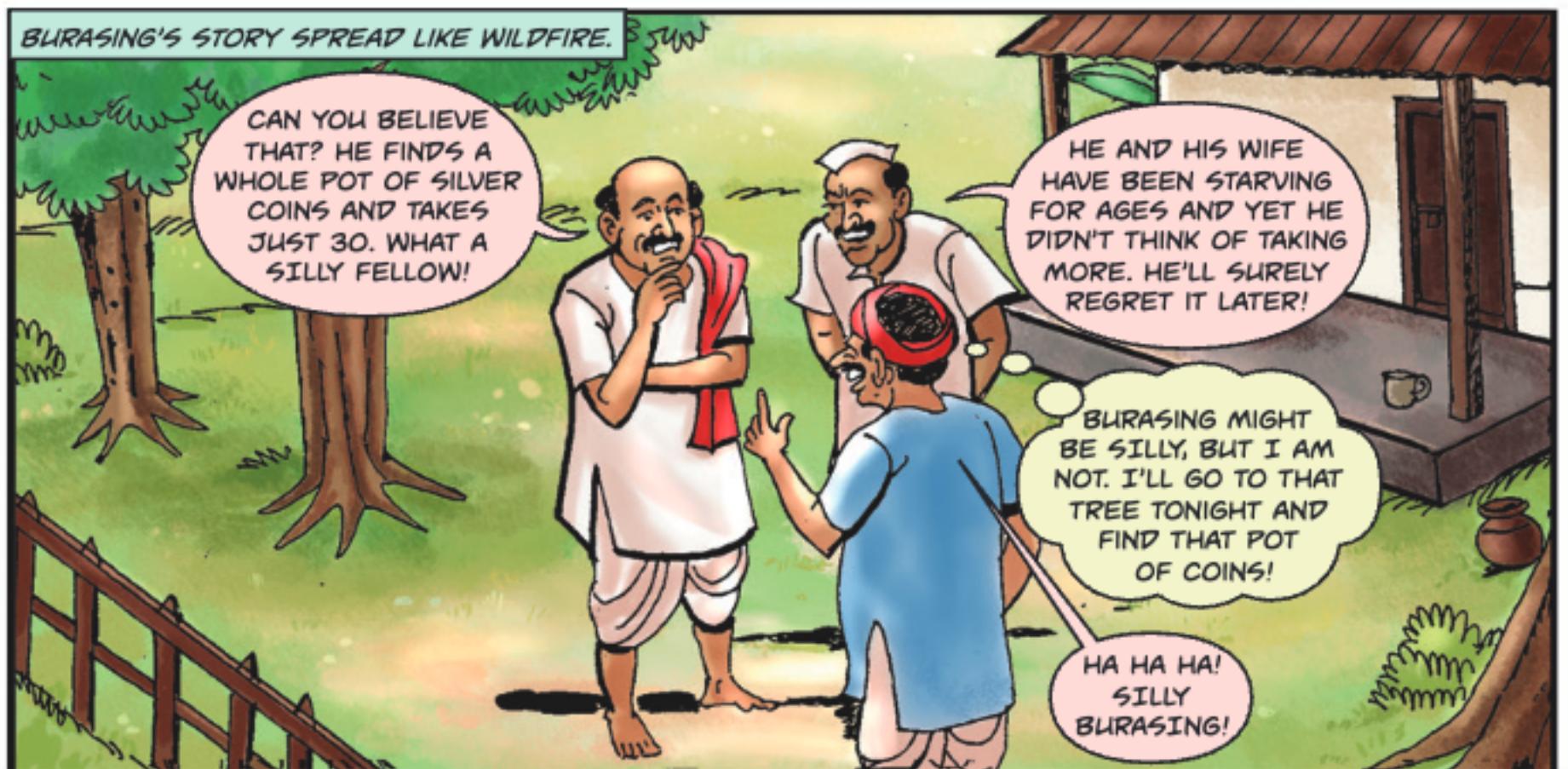
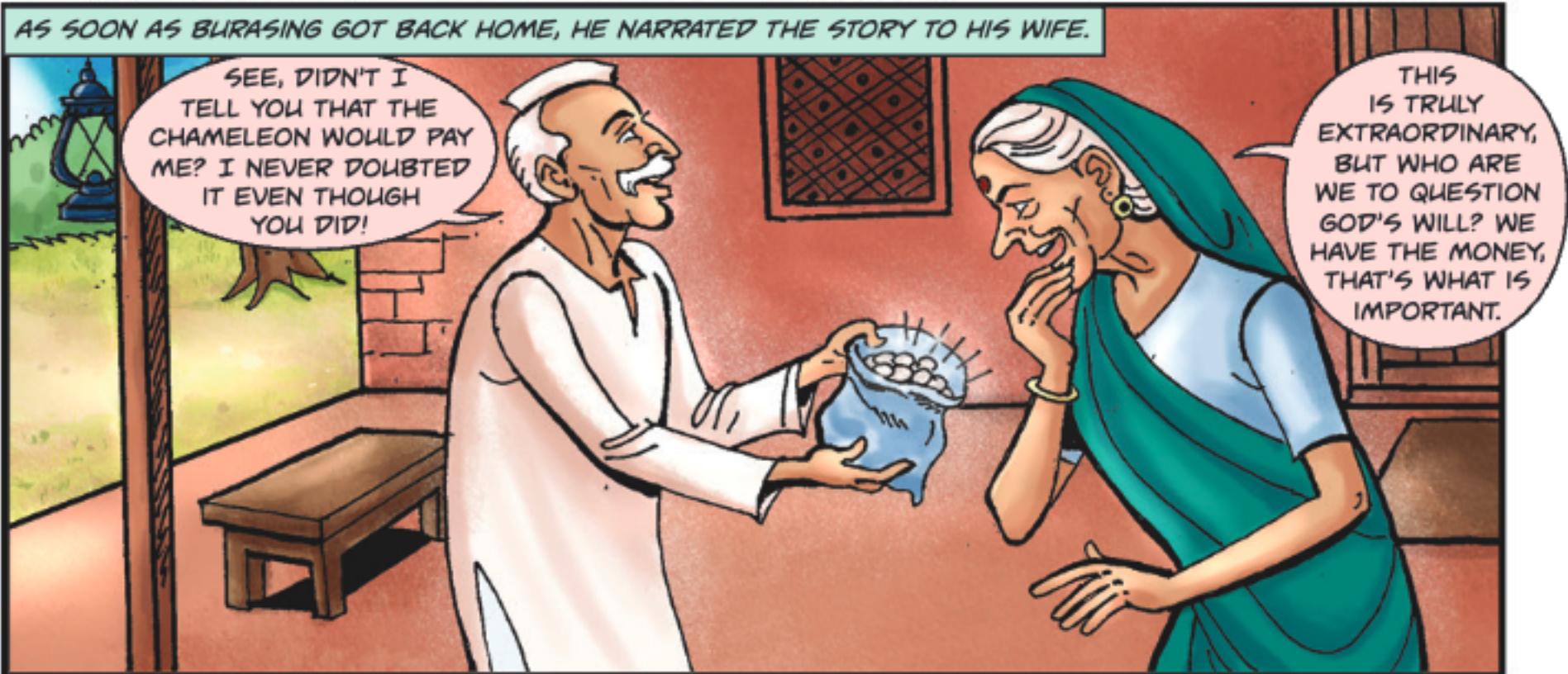
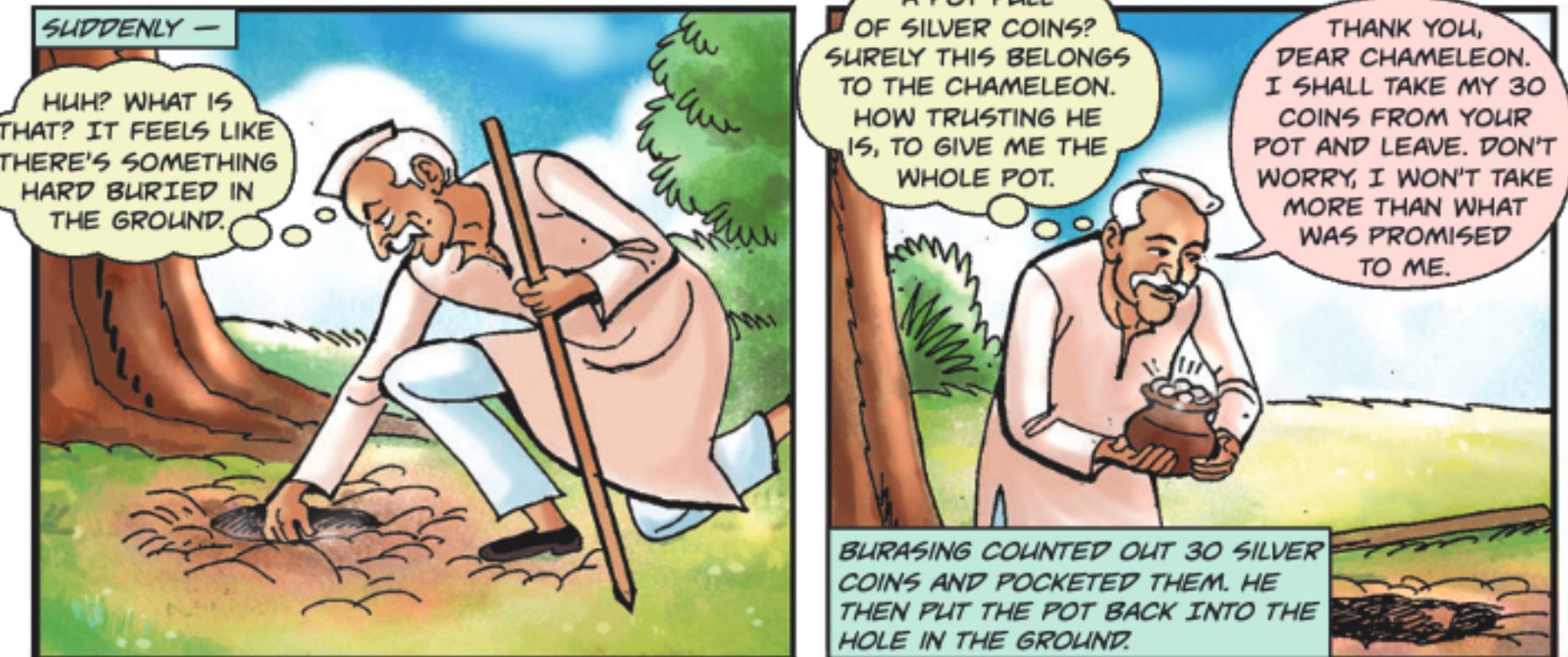
DEAR CHAMELEON, I SEE YOU LOOKING AT MY FINE, HEALTHY COW. I AM TAKING HER TO THE CATTLE FAIR BUT I WOULD LOVE TO SELL HER TO YOU IF YOU WISH.

THE CHAMELEON SLOWLY NODDED ITS HEAD, AS CHAMELEONS OFTEN DO.



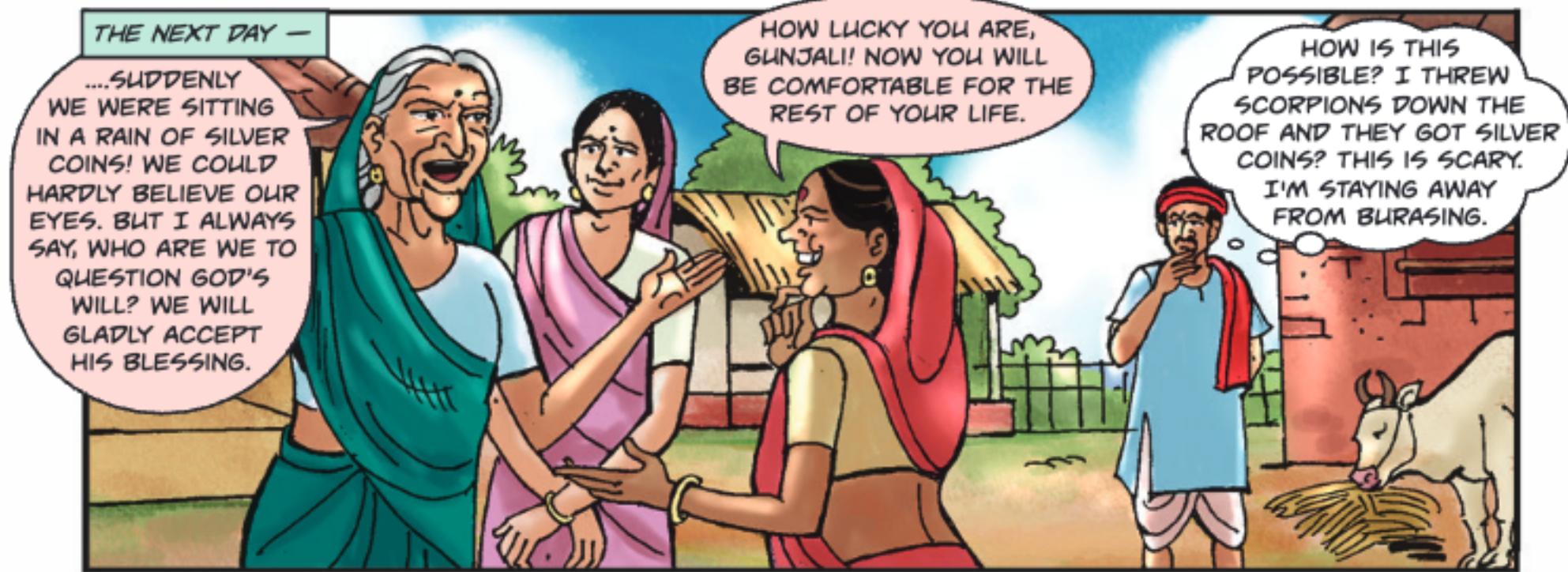
## AN UNLIKELY TRADE



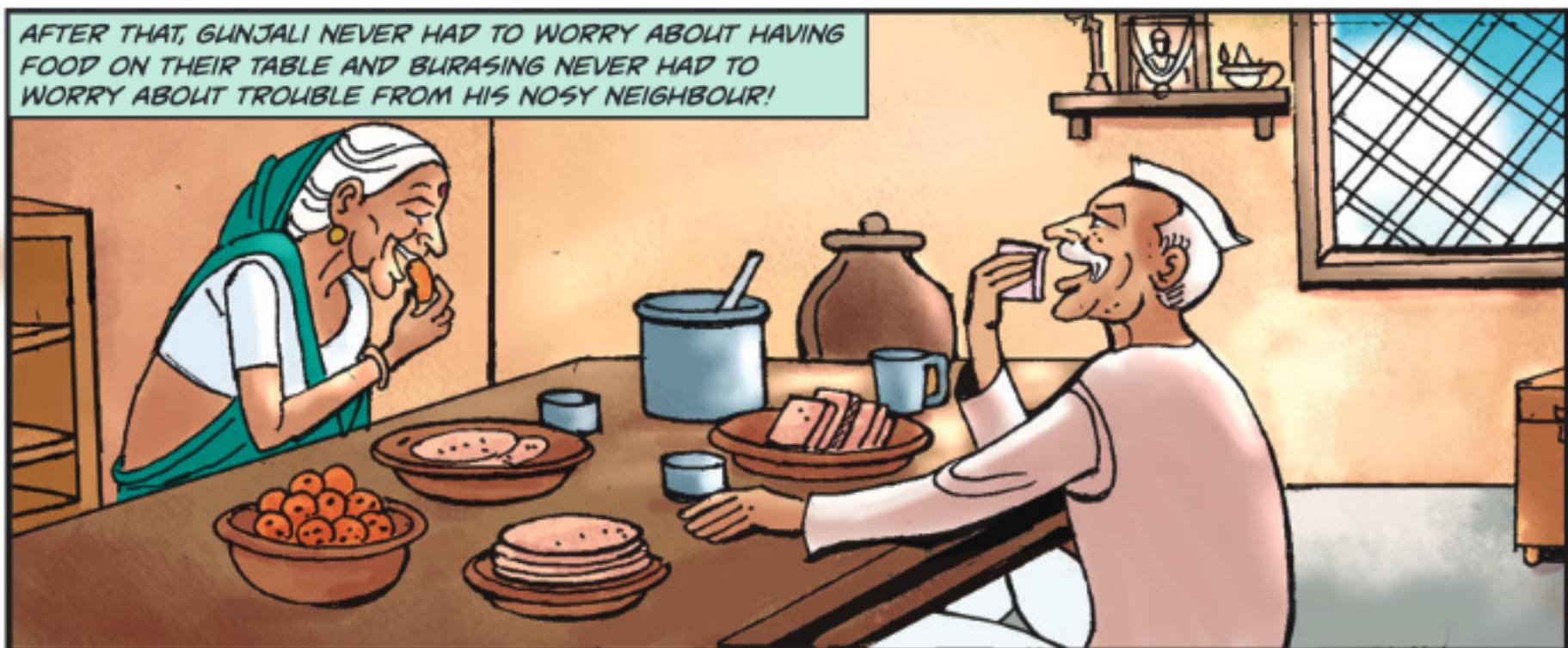


AN UNLIKELY TRADE





AFTER THAT, GUNJALI NEVER HAD TO WORRY ABOUT HAVING FOOD ON THEIR TABLE AND BURASING NEVER HAD TO WORRY ABOUT TROUBLE FROM HIS NOSY NEIGHBOUR!



# MORE CRABS FOR AATI

AATI AND MUKI WERE GOOD FRIENDS. ONE DAY —

MUKI,  
REMEMBER HOW  
MANY CRABS WE  
CAUGHT ON THE BEACH  
LAST SUNDAY? LET'S  
GO CRABBING AGAIN  
TOMORROW.

THAT  
WILL BE FUN,  
AATI!!

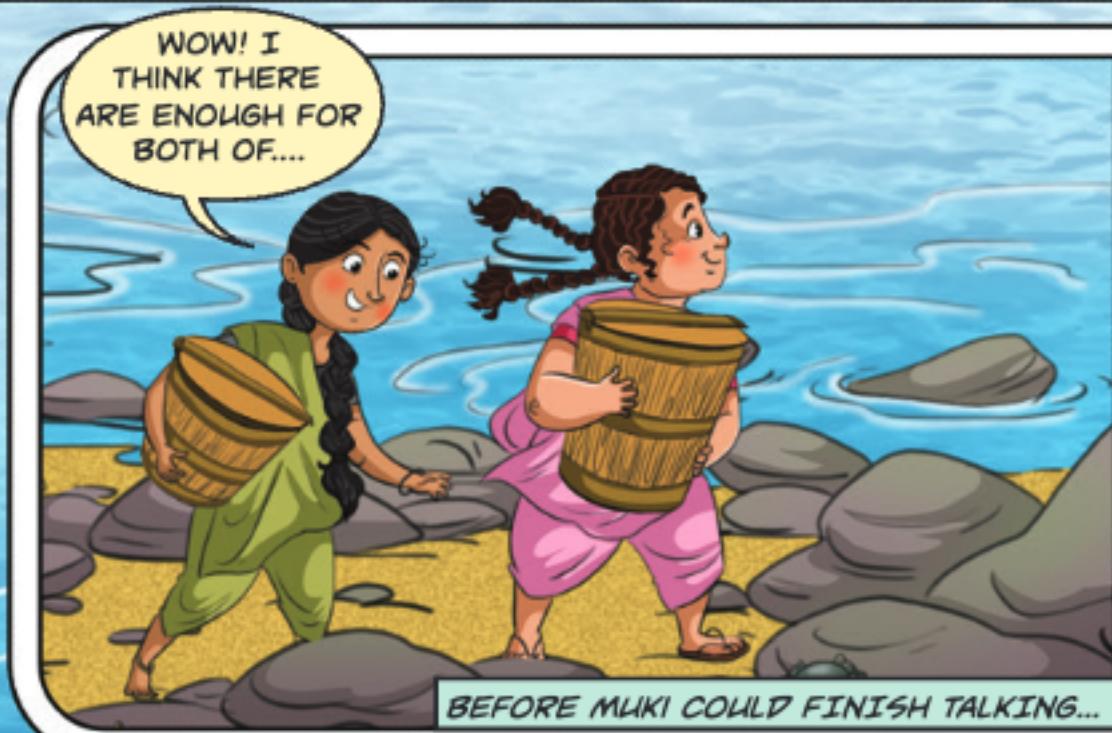
YAY! I'LL GET  
THE BIG BASKET  
TOMORROW.

THE NEXT MORNING —

THAT  
REALLY IS A  
BIG BASKET.

I AM ALL  
SET TO CATCH  
LOTS OF CRABS  
TODAY.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE ROCKY SHORES —











# NAHALI



**Nahali** is the name of a language that is spoken by the Nahal people in the Nandurbar district of Maharashtra. It is believed that Nahali was originally spoken by the residents of the **Toranmal village**. Over the years, people speaking different languages came and settled in Toranmal and learnt Nahali for trading purposes. The language was easy to learn and soon became widely used in the area, thus getting passed down generations. A **dialect of Nahali** is also spoken in **parts of Madhya Pradesh** including the **Dhar district and Madhavgarh**.

The Nahal people enjoy a rich and unique cultural life. **Kuladevatas** or clan-deities such as **Baba Hudol, Baal Saso, Baal Kumb, Billot Baba and Hiru Bai** are worshipped widely. A special ceremony called **Vaha** is also held in honour of the kuladevatas. This community ceremony, which takes place between December and January, is organised at night. People stay up the entire night, playing the dholki, singing folk songs, telling stories and performing poojas.

**Sour vegetables** and **maize flatbreads** are two of the most important dishes for the Nahal people. Traditionally, a staple meal of sour vegetables, maize flatbreads and a simple daal is prepared and taken along, by those working in the fields.

Games like **Dodi, Gilli-Danda, Chidhi Pat, Lagori, Khokho and Kabaddi** are very popular among children from this region. In an age where more and more kids use electronic devices for entertainment, the Nahal encourage their children to play sports and interact with nature.

The Nahal have a rich and unique heritage. With better access to education and technology, this community could thrive in the modern era.





# THE INVISIBLE MONSTER

## STORIES FROM NAHALI FOLKLORE

A water lily who befriends a buffalo. A fox who outwits a crocodile. A man who sells his cow to a chameleon. A father and son who encounter a monster. The stories from Nahali folklore are full of clever characters and magical places.

Nahali is the language spoken by the Nahal people of Nandurbar district in Maharashtra. Popularised by trade in the region, Nahali is widely spoken even in parts of Madhya Pradesh. Like in most other cultures, stories form an important part of the Nahali community and exemplify their unique and colourful lifestyle.

Amar Chitra Katha brings you The Invisible Monster, a collection of folktales from the Nahal people. These tales will make you laugh and also appreciate the rich lessons they teach, while offering a peek into the age-old oral tradition of this community.

